

Introduction to Russian Freemasonry

Freemasonry in Russia has a really rich history. It is the heritage of Russia, and world Masonry, as well.

Since the start of the Russian Masonry during the reign of Peter the Great and up to now, Russian Masons have made valuable contributions to Russian and world culture, the spiritual evolution of mankind, the perception of a Human's place on the Earth under the God, the growth and development, the maturing of the society. The spiritual ideals of Noble and Ethical society, Freedom, Brotherhood, Equality, Faith, — have always been the ideals of our Brethren. Russian Masonry has always been trying to "take a good man and make him better", to make Masons - the men possessing a strong belief in God, of high moral values.

And all the history of Russian Masonry, the list of Russian Masons prove, that it has succeeded in this. The names of I. Yelagin, A. Suvorov, N. Novikov, A. Pushkin, M. Garder, and others, are the best proof. During the times of Catherine II the Great, Paul I, Alexander I, Nikolas I, Alexander II, Alexander III, Nikolas II, our Brethren used to be the basis of Russian elite and had introduced a lot necessary changes into the Russian Society, propagated the ideals of humanitarianism, contributed to developing new Laws, and so on.

Continuously, during all its history, Russian Masonry has evolved as a part of the Whole — the Freemasonry. Deep and friendly relations with our Brethren from Great Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, and other countries have always been characteristic of Russian Masons. Visiting our meetings, exchanging new ideas and literature, helping in the organization of new Lodges, foreign Brethren took part in the activities of the Russian Masonry. Of course, Russian Brethren have visited the meetings of European and American Lodges, took part in Masonic activities since the Willhelmsbad Convention up to the present time. And now, our foreign Brethren take part in the meetings of our Lodges, when staying in Russia. We are always delighted to see them.

After the more than 70-years' recess, or "sleeping" period that was due to the laws of our not long ago closed society, prohibiting the very existence of any group, the aims of which were not precisely the same as the aims of

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governing party, the Russian Freemasonry has been revived. Actually, our history has not interrupted, and all this time, Russian Masonry has been keeping and developing its ideas, its principles and traditions, in other countries. Feeling deep gratitude towards our Brthren like Mikhail Vassilyevitch Garder, reading the history and the records of the meeting of Russian Lodges in France, we without a shadow of doubt say, that the Russian Masonry of today is the genuine offspring and descendant of the Russian Masonry of the times of A. Pushkin and A. Suvorov. The Fraternity not only has revived here, but it constantly grows and develops.

The Grand Lodge of Russia was constituted by the Grand Loge Nationale Francaise on June, 24, 1995. We have been recognized now by 70 Grand Lodges, including:

The Grand Lodge of Russia

Founded: 1995. Descent: France (GLNF)

Address: The Grand Secretary, P.O. Box 18, 109377 Moscow.

Telephone or Fax (709 5) 206 8176. Email glor@orc.ru

Lodges: 12. Membership: 200. Ritual: Scottish Rite Craft degrees.

Publications: Constitution.

History:

On 24 January 1731, when the Grand Lodge of England appointed a Captain John Phillips as Provincial Grand Master of Russia and Germany, masonry in Russia was mainly the preserve of foreign residents, chiefly British and German. In c. 1741 I Grand Lodge appointed as Phillips' successor a Scots Jacobite, James Keith (1696-1758), who fought in the Russian and Prussian service. Masonry took root in Russia in the reign of the Empress Elisabeth (1741-62), particularly among the nobility, and flourished for most of the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-96). The first regular lodge under the English system, Perfect Unity Lodge No. 414, was constituted at St. Petersburg in 1771. In 1772 Grand Lodge appointed the first native Provincial Grand Master, Ivan Yelagin (1725-94), secretary and theatrical adviser to Catherine. The 14 or so lodges under Yelagin's control united in 1776 to form a National Grand Lodge, which, under the aegis of the combined English and Swedish systems, practised a heterodox mixture of craft masonry, higher degrees masonry, Knights Templar and mystical and esoteric rites introduced from Germany and Sweden.

By the early 1780s, according to one account, there were c. 100 lodges in Russia, with an average membership of 25. Members included many of the

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foremost men of the day, including the writer and publisher Nikolai Novikov. Masonry, however, was held in increasing disfavour by Catherine, suspicious of its private meetings and even of its philanthropic activities. Government pressure began in 1782, Novikov was imprisoned in 1792, and by 1794 all lodges were forced to close. The Craft was tolerated under Catherine's son, Czar Paul (1796-1801), and still more so under his son, Czar Alexander I (1801-1825), who in 1810 formally permitted the establishment of masonic lodges. The Grand Lodge Astrea, founded at St. Petersburg in 1815, presided over 23 lodges by 1819, again largely under German and Swedish influence. In the period of reaction following the Napoleonic wars, however, with the spread of revolutionary secret societies, Alexander in 1822 issued a decree prohibiting masonry. It was certainly a fact that most of the army officers, who participated in the abortive Decembrist revolution on Alexander's death in 1825, were former masons. Alexander's brother and successor, Nicholas I (1825-55) suppressed masonry under a further decree in 1826. Thereafter, the Russian Craft existed in limbo. Masonry revived after the 1905 Revolution, and flourished until 1917, but was once more suppressed after the Bolshevik Revolution, formally in 1922.

Russian émigrés in France founded Lodge Astrea No. 100 in 1922, working in the Russian Language, under the Grande Loge Nationale Française (GLNF). Members of the GLNF provided a catalyst for the return of regular Freemasonry to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Notes for Visitors

As will be appreciated in view of Russian Masonic history, Russian masons tend to be discreet in relation to their membership. It is preferable to address envelopes to the Grand Secretary without any Masonic reference.

An intending visitor could endeavour to telephone the Grand Lodge office in Moscow when in the country, or attend it personally, in order to make arrangements to visit a lodge. However, be aware that the Grand Lodge office is not permanently staffed. The best recommendation is to contact the Grand Lodge office by either email or fax, well in advance, asking for a contact telephone number for use on arrival. Note that no mention of Masonic interests should be put on Visa Applications.

Visitors are most welcome, and can expect to be met at a convenient public place, then taken to a meeting. Presently, Russian lodges do not possess their own Masonic halls, but use rented accommodation, such as schools.

Dress for Russian lodges is a dark lounge suit, though a collar and tie is acceptable. Regalia is based on that of the GLNF, which in itself is similar to English regalia. Visitors will need to bring their own personal regalia with

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them. The ritual used by Russian lodges is the Scottish Rite Craft degrees, as used by Lodge Astrea No. 100 GLNF, and translated into Russian.

A festive board is held after every lodge meeting, analogous to the GLNF/English pattern, which includes a light supper or buffet, often replete with wine, beer, mineral water and, of course, vodka. A short formal toast list, and speeches often accompanies a supper. An overseas visitor is likely to be called upon to reply briefly to a toast in honour, while most Russian lodges use the Russian language, quite a few members are bilingual, and English is understood.

List of Lodges

While the names and numbers of Russian Lodges are noted below, meeting details are not — simply because meeting dates and places are not fixed, and can often be changed at short notice. No Russian lodge has yet obtained permanent premises. An intending visitor will be informed appropriately upon inquiry by fax or email to the Grand Lodge office in Moscow. Russian Lodges recess in June, July and August, except Jupiter No. 7 near Moscow, which meets all the year round. Otherwise they met monthly.

All lodges use the Russian language, except Lodge Aurora No. 6 and Brotherly Love No. 10 which work in English, while Northern Radiance No. 9 works in Russian and Armenian, and Alexander Pushkin No. 11 works in Russian and French. A research lodge, Quatuor Coronati No. 8, has recently been formed in Moscow.

Lodge Brotherly Love No. 10, was erected in April 1999, with a travelling warrant. Uniquely, it was actually consecrated, by arrangement with the Grand Lodge of Turkey, in Marmaris, Turkey. The initial lodge officers are Russian, Turkish, with one Lebanese brother. The lodge will travel and meet in East Asian Republics where no Freemasonry presently exists, and assist in creating indigenous lodges. It held its second meeting in Moscow in June 1999, a day prior to the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Russia. The lodge can be contacted via the Grand Lodge office in Moscow. Russia now has twelve lodges under charter, but given the size of the country, this number is likely to expand greatly in the years ahead. Currently chartered Russian Lodges are as follows:

Meeting in Moscow: Lodge Harmony No. 1, Lodge Lotus No. 2, Lodge Aurora No. 5, Lodge Quatuor Coronati No. 8, Lodge Northern Radiance No. 9, and Alexander Pushkin No. 11.

Meeting in St. Petersburg: Lodge Astrea No. 3

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Meeting in Archangelsk: Lodge Polar Star No. 6
Meeting in Voronezh: Lodge Gamaïoun No. 4
Meeting in Zvenigorod:
(Near Moscow): Lodge Jupiter No. 7
Meeting in Vladivostok: Lodge Pacific Rim No. 12
Meeting variously: Lodge Brotherly Love No. 10

RUSSIAN FREEMASONRY: A NEW DAWN AN OVERVIEW FROM 1731 TO 1996

This paper was delivered by V.W. Bro. Richard L. Rhoda, P.G.J.D., and Senior Warden of the Maine Lodge of Research at its annual meeting held at Orient Lodge No. 15 on June 29, 1996.

This paper is dedicated to Most Worshipful Brother George Dergachev, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia, and his 108 brethren.

"Russian Freemasonry began and grew in a period of Russian history similar to that of the present day. The Great War with Sweden, which drew heavily upon the resources of the country, had just been terminated by Peter the Great, and his sweeping reforms were bringing great changes to the whole Russian life. The old culture of Russia was being uprooted, and the dawn of a new history was just breaking."(1)

Bro. Boris Telepneff, 1922(2)

While 1995 was the 175th anniversary of the celebration of the Grand Lodge of Maine, it also marked the rebirth of the Grand Lodge of Russia for the first time in 173 years. It was constituted by the Grand Lodge Nationale Francaise on June 24, 1995 in Moscow.

At the suggestion of Grand Master Walter Macdougall, this paper has been prepared to suggest the challenge of considering what Maine Masons can do to assist in ensuring the survival and growth of Russian Masonry at this time.

Many will be aghast and unbelieving of such a suggestion. Strong will be the sentiment and pronouncements from certain quarters that we should do

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nothing, while others will say do nothing now but wait and see, and most curmudgeonly of all will be those who will say wait until they seek us out for recognition.

How long might we have to wait before the Masons of the Grand Lodge of Russia decide that they wish to be recognized by the Grand Lodge of Maine? Somehow I suspect that the few brave Russian Freemasons will have much more on their minds for years to come. Really, what is the State of Maine in the eyes of a Russian? Almost guaranteedly an unequivocal "Unheard of!"

With no offense to the many Grand Lodges in Brazil or Mexico, how many Maine Masons know of those various Grand Lodges or feel a need to reach out to them? With no national grand lodge in those countries, as here in the United States of America, Masonic recognition can be very slow in coming and perhaps only then because it is part of a wave when other grand lodges are doing it.

The Masonic issue for us has to be what can we do today to help ensure the successful rebirth and growth of Freemasonry in Russia! Formal recognition and all that good stuff can and will come in time, if Russian Freemasonry succeeds. But if it does not, when might the light be rekindled?

Russian Freemasonry has been reconstituted by the Grand Lodge Nationale Francaise with which we are in fraternal relations. We could sit in lodge with one of those Russian Freemasons and not be in violation of our Masonic obligations. So, why not reach out and correspond, encourage, and assist these Russian brethren if we can? Would not one of their lodges, or better yet another new lodge, appreciate receiving a used set of officers' jewels or aprons that one of our lodges no longer needs? Would one of our lodges be interested in purchasing two dozen white cloth aprons or gloves as a gift for one of the lodges? There is much we could do in the finest tradition of Masonic Brotherhood and Charity.

Getting off the bully pulpit, let us take a brief look at the history of Freemasonry in Russia. This must be brief and detached from Russian history which profoundly affected its existence and demise. Yet, a few lines about the country's leaders are necessary to start to understand the conditions and circumstances under which Freemasonry existed.

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Today our own Freemasonry is well established with no fractious bodies and eccentric leaders. Our Freemasonry is not derived from tablets of orthodoxy existing from time immemorial. While our system with its concordant bodies functions smoothly and without question in this day and age, such was not always the case. This observation is made so that we do not look too askance at the history of Russian Freemasonry which underwent birth and growing pains not unlike our own. The albatross for the Russians were their totalitarian rulers who were the norm for Europe at that time. Democracy as America brought to the world in 1776 with its Declaration of Independence was unknown and soon greatly feared. The French Revolution instilled fear throughout Europe. We must remember that it is only now that the seeds of true democracy are trying to catch hold and grow and be pursued to reach their ideals in Russia.

Peter the Great, the reformer, brought about the Imperial Age of Russia. He was the grandson of Michael Romanov, the founder of that line which ruled Russia from 1613 to 1917. Peter opened Russia to the west, embracing its ideas and seeking association with it. He traveled throughout Europe and sent students to study and learn its ways. He built a city on the Baltic Sea, St. Petersburg, better known in our life times as Leningrad, which became Russia's window to the west. He moved its government there from Moscow, the historical capital of Russia since the mid-thirteenth century.

Peter the Great was co-tsar from 1682 to 1689 with his half-brother, Ivan V. He was but 10 years old when ascending the throne from which he solely ruled from 1694 to his death in 1725. One Russian tradition has it that Peter became a Mason on a trip to England and brought it back to Russia. There is no hard evidence of this and most likely it is but another example of trying to gain acceptability by reference to association with a revered leader. It must be remembered that organized speculative Masonry had only existed in England for eight years before Peter died. Peter's greatest contribution to Russian Freemasonry is that he made it possible by opening up Russia to foreign merchants who settled and traded in Russia.

The most influential group of foreigners in Russia in the eighteenth century were the Germans from their various states who were connected with the Romanov family. Also of significant importance, both masonically and politically, were the Swedes who were a dominant political power in Northern Europe.

The period following Peter's death until 1762 saw a series of five leaders who are of no great significance to us except for their German influence. Anne, 1730-1740, was a sister of Peter the Great, and the widow of the Duke of Courland. Peter III, 1762, a grandson of Peter the Great, was the Duke of Holstein-Gattorp, and ruled but a few months before being overthrown in a palace coup and replaced by his German wife, Katherine, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst. She would rule until 1796, become known as Katherine the Great, and cause the first blows to fall on Russian Freemasonry.

As with English Freemasonry, little or nothing is known of the earliest lodges in Russia. They were most certainly in St. Petersburg and Moscow and were formed by foreigners, English or German.

Following the birth of speculative Masonry in London in 1717, grand lodges were formed in Ireland in 1730, Scotland in 1736, and in various continental countries. Those grand lodges were wont to appoint Provincial Grand Masters over vast territories to expand their authority wherever their people settled.

The earliest reliable information about Russian Freemasonry was the appointment by the Grand Lodge of England of Captain John Phillips in 1731 as the Provincial Grand Master of Russia. This would have empowered him to establish lodges in Russia which would have been ultimately under the control of London. No further information is known of him or of what he did, although it is speculated that he was a merchant captain.

The next Provincial Grand Master was General James Keith who was appointed in 1740 or 1741. He was of a celebrated Scottish family but made the mistake of supporting Charles Edward Stuart, Pretender to the Throne of England. He fled to Spain and eventually to Russia in 1747. He served its leaders with distinction while attaining the highest military honors. In 1762 he left Russia to serve Frederick the Great of Prussia.

While the earliest Masonic lodges in Russia generally were formed by foreigners, under Keith Masonry started to move into Russian society where its members were mostly young officers from the best families.

In 1756, under Empress Elizabeth (1741-1762), a daughter of Peter the Great who led a reaction to foreign influences, Russian Freemasonry met an obstacle when the Secret Chancellery of the Empire made an inquiry into

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what was the foundation of and who constituted its membership. "The inquiry says first that Freemasonry was defined by its members as 'nothing else but the key of friendship and of eternal brotherhood'." (3) Masonry was found not to be dangerous and it was allowed to continue, "although under police protection." Until this time, Masonry had existed as a fraternal brotherhood of no exceptional interest to the government except for its foreign influence. It was under Katherine the Great that Russian Freemasonry was to bloom with its own national leaders and organization. Under her, the first suppression of masonry would begin.

The first prominent Russian Freemason was Ivan Perfilievich Yelaguin (1725-1794), Senator, Privy-Counsellor etc. etc. He belonged to an ancient family of Russian noblemen and enjoyed the confidence of Katherine the Great (1762-1796). In June 1771, the Lodge of Perfect Unity was constituted in Petersburg by the Grand Lodge of England and drew its members mostly from English merchants who lived there. Many Russian nobles were also masons and they requested that the Grand Lodge of England issue a warrant for Yelaguin to be the Provincial Grand Master in the Russian Empire. This was done and the English system of Masonry met with great success and growth under his leadership. In 1770, Yelaguin had been elected Grand Master of the Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia under the auspices of the Berlin Grand Lodge, "Royal York." On February 28, 1772, he was appointed by the United Grand Lodge of England as Provincial Grand Master of the Empire of Russia. Under Yelaguin, members of the best Russian families joined the craft.

In his memoirs, Yelaguin described early Russian Freemasonry "as rather superficial: 'The worship of Minerva was often followed by the feasts of Bacchus'." (4) Yelaguin considered "of paramount importance the Masonic teachings of self-knowledge, moral perfection, benevolence, charity and virtue." (5)

Throughout the 18th century, Freemasonry developed down several avenues, especially on the Continent and in Russia. Orthodox Craft-Masonry from England was known as "Yelaguin's System." Its chief rival was the "Zinnendorf System" which emanated from Sweden and came to Russia via Berlin and a Bro. George Reichel. To the three blue lodge degrees the later system added certain "Knightly Degrees" which in Russia were felt to possess some mysterious knowledge.

In 1777, Grand Duke Paul Peter, son and political adversary of his mother, Empress Katherine, was initiated into Freemasonry by the King of Sweden who came to Petersburg for the occasion. By 1778 the major influence in Russian masonry was shifting to Moscow and that of St. Petersburg was declining. This was at a time when the Craft was faced with warrants from several different authorities and practiced many differing rites. There was no unifying national soul to Russian Freemasonry.

Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, in *A History of Russia*, writes that during the reign of Katherine the Great, Russian Freemasonry reached a zenith of about 2,500 members in some one hundred lodges in St. Petersburg, Moscow and some provincial towns. He further writes that "in addition to the contribution made by Freemasonry to the life of polite society, which constituted probably its principal attraction to most members, specialists distinguish two main trends within that movement in eighteenth century Russia: the mystical, and the ethical and social. The first concentrated on such commendable but illusive and essentially individual goals as contemplation and self-perfection. The second reached out to the world and thus constituted the active wing of the movement."(6)

The mystical aspect of Russian Freemasonry came through the Rosicrucians who were Christian mystics and students of mystical and occult lore. They were sometimes called "Martinists," from the great respect which they at one time held for the teachings of Louis Claude de St. Martin. At this time the Rosicrucian movement became dominant in Russian Masonry with one of its leaders being Nicholas Novikov (1744-1816), who was perhaps the most active publicist in Moscow. He, along with I. G. Schwarz, were prime movers in the Moscow period of Russian Masonry.

Mysticism permeated Russia during the reign of Katherine with St. Petersburg's fashionable society leading the way. The traditions of Russian Masonry and the Rosicrucian of the 18th century included: the practice of Christian virtues and self-improvement, philanthropy, Christian mysticism, and opposition to atheism, materialisms, and revolutionary tendencies.

Especially after 1782, the Rosicrucian movement was spread by I. G. Schwarz in Russia. He had gained the recognition of the independence of Russian Masonry from the Swedish system. In July 1782, he attended a Masonic Convention in Wilhelmsbad held by the Duke of Braunschweig,

Grand Master of the Rite of Strict Observance. He also obtained from German Rosicrucians the authority to promote the Order in Russia.

In 1783, Schwarz broke from the Duke of Braunschweig and "Russian Masons joined the main body of the Rosicrucian brotherhood"(7) which became a dominant influence in Russian Masonry for some time.

The Rosicrucians relied on the "lower" Masonic degrees for a new brother to learn of his vices and shortcomings. He was to become a better man through instructions in science and ethics while being delivered from the seven deadly sins of pride, arrogance, gluttony, lust, greediness, laziness and anger. After he regained for himself the prelapsarian state of man, he could pursue a mystic union with God in the higher grades of the order.

In 1784 Schwarz died and the fortunes of Russian Freemasonry would not survive his loss. A board of three plus two elected Grand Wardens oversaw the Craft and it even developed and spread into provinces but intrigue and suspicion brought it down.

In the 1780's two other factors played in the demise of Russian Freemasonry. As Peter III had been very favorably disposed towards Freemasonry, Katherine was somewhat hostile to any favorites of her late husband. Since the estrangement from the Grand Lodge of England, Russian Freemasonry had become too much associated with German Masonry which was under the leadership of Frederick the Great of Prussia, archenemy of Katherine.

Katherine's leading political rival was her son, Grand Duke Paul, who was her open enemy. If he in fact was not a Mason he was favorably inclined towards the Craft, at least the symbolic lodges. He was Grand Master of the Knights of Malta which had a rivalry with the Masonic Templar degrees.

The Masonic Rosicrucian leader, Nicholas Novikov had a prominent bookshop in Moscow. Following a raid on it in 1786, books on Masonry were declared to be more dangerous than those of the French "Encyclopaedists". This was in spite of a decision by the Metropolitan of the Russian Church in Moscow that the books, some 461 works, were all faithful to the church. At this time the schools and hospitals sponsored by the Masons were taken away from their control.

In 1787 a terrible famine swept over Russia. The Masons organized the most effectual help for the stricken population through the efforts of Novikov who formed a society especially for that purpose. There were fears that some Masons were trying to acquire popularity among the masses for political purposes through their charity.

Prior to 1790, Katherine had presented a front of being favorable to the teachings of the Enlightenment and of Voltaire but she became frightened by the French Revolution. Novikov was supportive of a book by Alexander Radishchev, Journey from Petersburg to Moscow, which showed the terrible plight of the Russian peasants. Radisheckev's call for the reform and emancipation of the serfs was the final straw and the pendulum swung back from any liberal views that Katherine had been masquerading behind.

In April 1782, secret societies were prohibited by the government but Masonry had not been subject to the regulation. In 1791, the General Governor of Moscow undertook to suppress Masonry. Novikov was arrested and confined while others received milder punishments. By 1794, Katherine made it known to her statesmen who she knew belonged that the Craft did not meet with her approval. While there was no open prohibition to the Craft many lodges in St. Petersburg voluntarily closed in compliance with the desire of Katherine. Yelaguin issued an Order closing all of his English orientated lodges which had generally opposed the Rosicrucian influence.

With the accession of Paul I to the throne in 1796 he abolished the sentences against Masons which had been passed on them under his mother's reign. While Masonry remained prohibited, officially, it existed and even began to increase again. He was killed in a palace revolution in 1801.

Alexander I, surnamed the Blessed, son and successor of Paul I, ruled Russia from 1801 to 1825. Under him, Freemasonry again rose high in the east only to be struck down again as its members deplored its lamentable condition following years of weak leadership and as it became a political concern to the Emperor.

The tradition exists that Alexander became a Mason in 1803 and there is evidence that he was a member of a lodge in Warsaw. While all secret societies were still banned in Russia, new lodges began to appear. In 1810 Masonic lodges were officially allowed and recognized and many bore his name. New lodges not only appeared in Moscow and St. Petersburg but also

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in Siberia and the Crimea. Many military lodges were formed during the Napoleonic wars.

In 1810 the old adherents to the Yelaguin or English system of Masonry joined with the Rosicrucian Masons to form the Grand Directorial Lodge of Saint Prince Vladimir of Order as the unifying body for Russian Freemasonry.(8) By this time the Craft was growing so fast that it attracted the vigilant eye of the government who found a willing informant in John Boeber. He was the leader of the Swedish system of Masonry which was then the dominating influence in Russian Masonry. This system was closely akin to the Rosicrucian movement and was dominated by the "higher degrees" which were strictly Christian in character.

By 1815 their innate differences lead to its dissolution and the forming of two Grand Lodges by August 30th. The Grand Lodge Astrea was the dominant body which initially confined its interest to the blue lodge degrees and freely admitted members with diverse backgrounds and interests. The second, the Swedish Provincial Grand Lodge, was strictly regulated and of less concern to the government. While the Grand Lodge Astrea had to submit a constitution to the government for approval to exist, it remained a concern to the authorities.

By 1820, when the Grand Lodge of Maine was formed, the Grand Lodge Astrea was composed of 24 lodges but there was no real strength to it. Lodge ritual work followed one of five offerings:

Hamburg modification of the English ceremonial,
Zinnendorf's rite,
rectified Strict Observance rite,
Swedish rite, and
Fessler's modified English rite.

In his article, Telepneff did an analysis of the Astrea lodges and it is clear that its predominant character was German followed by Russian and Polish. Russian Freemasonry had lost its national character from the days of Yelaguin. No unifying ritual further weakened the Craft. It was but a house of cards awaiting a strong wind.

Over the years, Alexander had grown from a young forward-looking ruler to reactionary ruler over a suspicious government. Masonry no longer held a

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favorable position. Russian Masonry met its betrayer in a strong conservative politician and a Mason from the old school, Egor A. Kushelev, Lieutenant-General and Senator. He was elected Deputy Grand Master of Grand Lodge Astrea in 1820 even though his ideal was the Swedish System. He found himself at the head of a body whose members held entirely opposite views from one another, both Masonically and socially. Some held dangerous political strivings and could become nests of the "Illuminati."

This was all too much for Kushelev who sought to restore the old rules and doctrines as he understood them even though they were opposed by his members. In 1821, he wrote to his Emperor suggesting that Russian Freemasonry be placed more strictly under the control of the government or that the Craft be permanently closed.

On August 1, 1822, without warning Alexander decreed the closing of all Masonic lodges and all secret societies in general. This struck as a thunderbolt and it was meekly complied with by the lodges. On August 10th, the last open meeting of Russian Masons was held. There were isolated cases of lodges continuing to meet in St. Petersburg and Moscow and even more so in the provinces, but Russian Freemasonry was broken.

The reign of Nicholas I, 1825-1855, was even more stringent than the closing years of his father's. On August 21, 1826, he confirmed a decree closing Masonic lodges. This brought about the abolition of the Craft although secret meetings are known to have continued until at least 1830.

Masonry returned to Russia in the first quarter of the 20th century. Unfortunately, these Masons were mostly involved in the political turmoil of the age as witnessed by the 1905 uprising against the government and the revolution of 1917, which toppled the last Romanov Tzar, Nicholas II.

Telepneff gives a very good synopsis of Russian Freemasonry in the first quarter of this century from information provided from the Russian Assistant Consul-General in Paris in 1922. I quote for its succinctness:

"At the beginning of 1906 about fifteen Russian, well-known for their social and political activities, mostly members of the constitutional-democratic party, joined French Lodges; some became members of the Grand Orient, but the majority entered two Lodges under the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite--"Kosmos" and "Mount-Sinai." On

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returning to Russian, they formed two provisional Lodges, "The Polar Star" in Petersburg and "Regeneration" in Moscow. In May, 1908, both Lodges were solemnly opened by two members of the High Council of the Grand Orient, specially sent for that purpose from Paris. At the same time the Grand Lodge of France established two Lodges" one in Petersburg ("Phoenix") and one in Moscow. Russian Lodges obtained the right to establish further Lodges without interference from Paris, and accordingly in 1908 and 1909 two more Lodges were opened: "The Iron Ring" in Nijni-Novgorod and one in Kiev. The existence of Masonic Lodges was discovered by the Russian Government in 1909; it also became known to the authorities that they were of French origin. It was then decided by the Russian Lodges to suspend work, and this was accordingly done till 1911, when some of their members decided to renew with due prudence their activities. One would not call these activities Masonic in any sense, as their chief aim was purely political--the abolishment of autocracy, and a democratic regime in Russia; they acknowledged allegiance to the Grand Orient of France. This political organization comprised in 1913-1914 about forty 'Lodges.' In 1915-1916 disagreements arose between their members who belonged to two political parties (the constitutional democrats and the progressives) and could not agree on a common policy; ten Lodges became dormant. The remaining thirty Lodges continued to work, and took part in the organization of the 1917 March revolution and in the establishment of the Provisional Government. Their political aim being attained, the organization began to decay; twenty-eight Lodges existed on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution, and since then most of their members have left Russia." (9)

Writing in the fall of 1922, Telepneff reported that two Russian Lodges had been formed in Paris under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of France while a Russian lodge existed in Berlin, The Northern Star Lodge, under a warrant of the Grand Lodge of the Three Globes.

Futile attempts to reestablish Russian Freemasonry met with the mandate of the 4th Congress of the Communist International in Moscow which required all Communist Masons to sever their lodge membership. They could not be considered for important posts in the new reign until two years after their severance. In 1925 Telepneff wrote that "regular Masonic activities of every description have ceased in Russia proper, due to the severe restrictions imposed by Bolshevik authorities."(10)

Simon Greenleaf, the second Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Maine, 1822-1824, compiled a book entitled A Brief Summary into the Origin and Principles of Free Masonry from a series of lectures he gave while he was the District Deputy Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in the District of Maine. He wrote, as regards the character of Masonry,

"Yet still, the fraternity, bound together by the most solemn obligations, and these strengthened by the remembrance of the common danger to which they had recently been exposed, continued to assemble, at the customary periods, for purposes of charity and brotherly love. Masonry contained something too excellent and attractive, and its secrets were too curious and valuable, to be abandoned on light grounds. It was a strong bond of union. It possessed a key which unlocked the middle chamber of the heart. Its secrets always served as letters of recommendation, and to the present day have continued to entitle their possessor to the benefits of hospitality and protection. At various periods it has declined, and sometimes has suffered severe oppression. Despotic governments have always been afraid of secret assemblies; and all the governments of Europe have, in their turn, been despotic, and have enacted laws against such associations. But by persecution, Masonry has never been suppressed; on the contrary its foundations have been strengthened. Even in times of war and anarchy its benign principles have continued their salutary operation on society, and the order still flourishes with increasing reputation."(11)

The persecution of Russian Freemasonry has been long and hard but like the Phoenix, the Craft is rising again. With the collapse of communism and with the greater opportunity of Russians to travel abroad, some have been exposed to and have embraced Freemasonry. What an affirmation these brethren bring to the observations of M.W. Bro. Greenleaf. What an obligation rests on us to aid their endeavors.

This writer has been advised in a letter of April 22, 1996 of the following by George Dergachev, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia. On January 14, 1992, the first regular Lodge "Harmony" was constituted in Moscow by the Grand Lodge National Francaise. This lodge now has 41 members.

September 8, 1993 will be a memorable day in Russian Freemasonry for three more lodges were constituted by the Grand Lodge National Franchise; Lotus No. 2 in Moscow with 36 current members; New Astrea No. 3 in St. Petersburg with 19 current members; and Gamaiou No. 4 in Voronezh with

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13 current members. Voronezh is a city lying south southeast of Moscow on the Voronezh River shortly before its joining with the River Don.

M. W. Bro. Dergachev writes "Most of the Brothers have graduated from the Universities. Among them there are scientists, journalists, businessmen, bankers, officers of the Army, Navy, policemen, engineers, writers, producers and lawyers."

These four Regular Daughter Lodges of the Grand Lodge Nationale Francaise formed the Grand Lodge of Russian on June 24, 1995. In addition to their Mother Grand Lodge, they have been recognized by the Grand Lodges of Poland, Hungary and New York. The Grand Master and Bro. Vladimir Djanguirian, his Grand Secretary, attended by invitation the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of New York this past May.

While this paper has only quickly hit upon some of the high points in the history of Russian Freemasonry as provided by Bro. Telepneff, it is hoped that it will make us realize that the Craft has a long history in Russia. May we realize how it has suffered at the hands of autocratic and totalitarian leaders. May we be moved to seek to help our Brothers prevail in their endeavors to advance Freemasonry in Russia at this time.

The dawn of a new history is breaking in Russian Freemasonry, may its light never again falter, may it glow eternally.

So mote it be!

So say we all for charity.

1. Almost 75 years later, we can change Sweden to read the West and Peter the Great to read Gorbachev and Yeltsin and once again, for the third time, have this paragraph accurately reflect conditions in Russia.

2. Telepneff, Boris, "Freemasonry in Russia", 35 Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, at P. 261. The source of most of the information for this review is taken from three papers presented by Bro. Telepneff to Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, London, the Premier Lodge of Masonic Research. This writer is the Secretary of its Correspondence Circle for the State of Maine.

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This writer wishes to acknowledge that while not all of this paper should be in quotation marks with one big footnote to Bro. Telepneff, a great deal of the material and many phrases have been used without the same. Any praise of merit for this article belongs entirely to the original writer. This writer only wishes to make this information available to the readers to help inform them of Russian Freemasonry.

The two other papers are: 38 A.Q.C. 6, "Some Aspects of Russian Freemasonry during the Reign of the Emperor Alexander I" (1925) and 39 A.Q.C. 174, "A Few Pages from the History of Swedish Freemasonry in Russia," (1926).

The article in 35 A.Q.C. carries an extensive bibliography of 19 principal Russian works on Freemasonry. Many of these works are available in the British Museum.

All three volumes of A.Q.C. were published by W.J. Parrett, Ltd., Printers, Margate.

3. 35 A.Q.C. at 263.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. at 272.

6. Oxford University Press, 1963, New York at Page 326-327.

7. 35 A.Q.C. at 275.

8. Vladimir, The Great (St. Vladimis Svyatoslavich, 956-1015), was the first Christian sovereign of Russia. He consolidated the Russian realm from the Baltic to the Ukraine with Kiev as his capital. He married the sister of Byzantine Emperor Basil II, accepted Christianity, and ordered the conversion to Christianity of his subjects.

9. 35 A.Q.C. At 291.

10. 38 A.Q.C. At 66.

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11. Printed by Arthur Shirley, 1820, Portland and reprinted for the Maine Lodge of Research by Lincoln County Publishing Company, 1984, Damariscotta, Maine.

Acknowledgments by the author:

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I wish to acknowledge an e-mail I received from Cyrill Gluskkoff on October 19, 1997 which corrected two errors in my paper. Most importantly he advised:

"The city that Peter I had built was named by him Sanct Peterburg in honor of the saint after whom he was named. It was only during the war with Germany that the German sounding name of Sanct Peterburg was changed in 1914 to the purely Russian name of Petrograd (not a German name) reflecting the animosity towards the enemy. In 1924 the city was renamed Leningrad by the Communists in honor of their revolutionary dictator."

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Valerian Obolensky
RUSSIANS IN EXILE
- The History Of a Diaspora -
Part II: Before the Revolution

Decembrists and Russian Freemasons

The Decembrists and freemasons played a very important role in Russian history, because they were the only 'revolutionaries' that ever contributed something to the well-being of the people of Russia. Many Decembrists and freemasons were killed or imprisoned; some managed to escape abroad, where they lived in exile.

To be able to show what role Russian freemasons' lodges have played in Russian politics, it seems necessary to explain what freemasonry is.

What is freemasonry? The notion 'freemasonry' or 'masonry' has several meanings, each in a different level. First of all freemasonry is an organization, a union of freemasons, of which one can become a member, just like every other club. Freemasonry is however more seclusive.

After application one is only embraced after an examination, and the entering itself is a ritual inauguration, about which secrecy is kept. Not everyone is admitted, but the freemasons say that race or religion, social standard or status are of no importance.

Second, the notion 'freemasonry' is synonymous with a certain atmosphere, that is the spiritual climate in which freemasons live and work. He who wants to become a freemason has to be motivated to go into his Weltanschauung and philosophy of life. It is required that he independently wants to search for truth, meaning and harmony.

The tools of the freemasons are symbols of notions like 'justice' (carpenter's square), 'radiation' (compass) and 'equality' (spirit level). Another symbol is the rough-hewn stone, which the freemason has to tool into the cubic stone.

The 'manual' of freemasonry is the ritual with its symbols. The 'subject material' is divided into three parts Ä inaugural degrees. Through these three degrees, which are connected and form one unity, one is inaugurated, from pupil to mate to master. Every freemason however realizes that he always

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will stay a pupil, always will make mistakes, so that he constantly has to refine himself.

The patron of the Order is St. John. The gatherings outside the temple are called 'comparitions', in which certain subjects are discussed. Sometimes one of the brothers submits a paper, sometimes non- members are asked to read. Ideally in the lodge one doesn't speak about politics or religious differences, because these are subjects which usually lead to discord.

Everyones point of view just has to be respected.

Besides all serious matters one also finds cosyness in the lodge, because after the comparition the freemasons sit together, having a cup of coffee, a drink, or sometimes a meal.

It is said that freemasonry was brought to Russia by Peter the Great, but that's not true. The first freemasons in Russia were foreign merchants, who were attracted by Peter's new capital.

In 1731 Captain John Philips of the English Grand Lodge was appointed Provincial Grand Master of Russia. In 1740 the same title was granted to the later Prussian Field Marshall James Keith, who served in the Russian army. This Scottish laird was one of the most interesting personalities of his time. Being a supporter of the Stuarts he had to go in exile, and Philips V introduced him to the Russian Court. The Russian freemasons' lodges consisted in those days of English seamen and merchants and some Russian aristocrats.

A very important freemason was Laurentius Natter, the famous engraver and diamond worker at the European courts, who came from Florence to St. Petersburg.

Also an important role played Professor Johann Eugen Schwarz from Moscow, and the eminent writer Nicholas Ivanovich Novikov, who was the founder of Russian journalism. Two very enlightened men, who not just contributed very much to freemasonry, but also influenced spiritual life in entire Russia. Schwarz, a German and Philosophy Professor, founded adult education centers and teacher training colleges, published school books and founded hospitals. Novikov also wanted to fight illiteracy and barbarism. He opened a print shop, published non-specialist and religious works, and founded a library, which was used by all layers of society. He and his friends stimulated the education and development of poor, yet gifted young people. But Novikov was accused of misleading the people, for which he was imprisoned four years in the Schluesselburg Castle.

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Soon a new 'Provincial Grand Lodge' was founded, which subsequently was called 'National Grand Lodge'. In this and other independent lodges the high aristocracy set the tone. Well known freemasons of those days were Count Roman Vorezov, one of Catharina's protégé's, Lieutenant-General Melissino, the founder of an own lodge, Baron Von Ungern-Sternberg, the Princes Alexander and Nicholas Troubetzkoy, Gagarin, Dolgorouky, Golitsyn, Netvitsky and many, many others.

However, all these inspired works of the Moscovian nobility raised the mistrust of the courtiers in St.

Petersburg. They said that progression was bad for the Church and the State, and that the Moscovian freemasons kept arsenals in their cellars, to equip entire armies. The Chief of the Moscow police was ordered to search everything thoroughly, and to look for weapons, but nothing was found of course. Yet all the new institutions were banned, and the founders were bannished to Siberia.

Major Kutuzov's capital was confiscated; he happened to be in Berlin at the time, so he escaped bannishment. Novikov however was once more thrown into the dungeons of the Schluesselburg.

After the French Revolution the anti-masonic sphere also reached Russia. Catharina II didn't ban the lodges, but she showed the gentlemen freemasons that she couldn't approve of their membership of the order, as a result of which the masonic works were limited. Paul I banned the lodges and in 1803 Alexander I permitted them again, after which once more lodges were founded. Grand Duke Constantin, Count Stanislav Potoki, Count Ivan Vorontsov, Alexander von Würtemberg, the Chief Treasurer Alexander Narishkin and a large number of other courtiers entered.

In the first half of the 19th century some writers and poets, like Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol, became extremely popular. At first Pushkin sympathized with liberalism and the Decembrists, but later his political opinions became moderately conservative. Many aristocratic young men picked up their liberal ideas in Western Europe, and the plans for a palace revolution became more and more realistic.

Alexander I was a freemason and initially he introduced very important educational reforms and abolished corporal punishment, but less than twenty years later he himself was one of the most harsh opponents of all progressive movements. He banned freemasonry, after it had existed in Russia for 90 years. Due to the absence of the telegraph and the railroads the message of

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Alexander I's death only arrived in St. Petersburg on December 8, 1825. Grand Duke Constantin Pavlovich Romanoff (1779- 1831), the second son of Paul I, who should have succeeded Alexander, had much earlier decided not to ascend the throne, but this fact was not known to the people. Everyone expected that Constantin would be the next tsar, but then was announced that on December 26 the oath of allegiance had to be sworn to Tsar Nicholas I. The Decembrists didn't think of Alexander's much younger brother Nicholas Pavlovich Romanoff (1796-1855) as an acceptable Tsar. Nobody ever had bothered to tell the people that Constantin rejected his rights to the throne a long time ago. The disappointment and anger were great. The rebellions, who only later would call themselves Decembrists, chose this day for a rise. They convinced the soldiers of some regiments that nobody could force them to swear the oath of allegiance to Nicholas I and that they were entitled to a constitution. Some soldiers thought that 'Constitution' was the name of Constantin's wife.

The rebellions occupied the Senate Square. All negotiations failed. The military governor of St.

Petersburg also tried to persuade them, but he was killed. The rebellions were badly organized, and with the help of loyal troops Nicholas I routed the Decembrists. The military rise in Southern Russia also failed. Immediately afterwards the first Decembrists were arrested. Over 120 men, most of them aristocrats, were put on trial. 5 of the instigators of the rise, among them Colonel Pestel, were hanged.

31 Decembrists were sentenced to hard labour camps in Siberia and the others were bannished to Siberia or imprisoned.

Nicholas I renewed the prohibition of freemasonry in 1826. The harsh measurements of Nicholas I forced the freemasonry in Russia to go underground. Now and then a modest masonic flame flared up in small circles. Alexis Feofilaktovich Pisemsky (1821-1881) wrote about it in his novel The Freemasons.

The lineage of Frolov has a military background and thanks it's nobility to Peter the Great's table of ranks. The Frolovs came from the Crimea. Philip Frolov was the commander of the military fortress in the Kerch peninsula. He had 6 children: Alexander, Nicholas, Peter, Elisaveta, Claudia and Pelageya. His son Alexander Filipovich Frolov (1804-1885) studied in the military academy of Sevastopol, to surpass his father's military career. In the summer of 1825 he was a 21 years old lieutenant of the Penzensky

Regiment, but also a Decembrist, who in 1826, together with his brother, was sentenced to 15 years of hard labour in Siberia.

In December 1825 Vasili Lvovich Davidoff was arrested for his part in the rise of the Decem- brists.

Also arrested were his friends Michael Orlov and Giuseppe (Ossip) Poggio. In July 1826, some days after the execution of the most dangerous Decembrists (Colonel Pestel, Riliev, Muraviev-Apostol and Kachovsky), he and Prince Serge Volkonsky, Prince Evgeni Obolensky, Prince Serge Troubetzkoy, the brothers Peter and André Borissov, Yakubovich and Artamon Muraviev were bannished to Siberia. The gentlemen were to be kept busy, but not so much that it would damage their health. Nicholas I didn't need any martyrs.

But the food was bad and Prince Evgeni Petrovich Obolensky (1796-1865) became scorbutic. On December 27, 1826 the chief guard of the political prisoners in the state mines of Nershinsk wrote in his report, 'Obviously Troubetzkoy has a lung disease. He brings up blood.' The prison physician Dr.

Vladimir wrote, 'As the result of scurvy Obolensky suffers from severe toothaches.'

Single Decembrists often married local girls in their place of bannishment. Married Decembrists were usually accompanied by their wives and children. Prince Evgeni Obolensky, who once was a very popular guest in the Petersburg salons, married Varvara Baranov (1821-1894), daughter of the serf Samson Baranov, in Yalutorovsk, West-Siberia. Everybody opposed to the marriage, even the civil servant who had to marry them, and even the bride herself. 'If Evgeni wishes me well, why doesn't he give me money, so that I can marry someone of my own class?' she asked. But the marriage was to be quite a success.

Besides showing the unlawfulness of Nicholas I's ascending the throne as Tsar of all Russians, the Decembrists protested against other serious abuses in Russian society, like serfdom. Alexander I had started to take the abolishment of serfdom into consideration, and Nicholas I was more or less forced to follow this policy, but since the rise of the Decembrists he didn't trust the nobility anymore. The government conceived the idea to leave the exploitation of the farmers to the landed gentry, only supervised by the government. The act of 1842 said that the landowners had to determine the duties of the farmers, but that's all what happened. In fact nothing changed.

Nicholas I hated consultations and mutual agreements, and soon he took refuge with the autocratical system. They who advocated a more democratic administration were considered traitors and were bannished to Siberia. The freedom of the press was limited, the universities were placed under control of the state, and the 'Third Division' of the Imperial Chancellery, a special unit of the political police, was founded. This unit could at all times make an appeal to the also just founded Corps of Gendarmes.

Everyone in military or civilian service who was in the slightest way suspected of political unreliability, was fired, which meant the end of their careers. This way the quality of the civil servants and the military decreased considerable, because everyone with deviant political views was arrested immediately and bannished after imprisonment.

By the way he crushed the Decembrists' rise, Nicholas I showed that he was as harsh as his father. His motto was, 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy and Nationalism.' Feodor Dostoevsky, one of the greatest writers Russia has ever known, was bannished to Siberia in 1849, because he was a member of a group which was interested in the backgrounds of French socialism.

Because Nicholas I granted him a reduction of his punishment - he wasn't a real nobleman, so he probably could be trusted - Alexander Frolov was released on December 14, 1835. However, he was not allowed to leave Siberia. In the winter of 1846 he got married in Shusha, Siberia, to Yevdokia Nikolaevna Makarova. She was a daughter of the Cossack ataman Nicholas Makarov from Kaptirevo, 10 miles south of Shusha. They had 4 children: Nicholas, Nadezhda, Peter and Fedia. In February 1855 Frolov was a free man, as long as he didn't show his face in Moscow or St. Petersburg. The Frolov family left for the Crimea, where Alexander started a sheep farm, together with three serfs he had redeemed.

Just like his companions in misfortune Vasili Davidoff was bannished for more than 30 years. 7 of his 13 children were born in Siberia. He died in 1854. Two years later Alexander II announced a general pardon, after which Vasili's family could return to Kamenka, the family estate.

Prince Evgeni Obolensky and his Varvara became five children. Ivan (1850-1880) became a physician and Peter (1851-?) became a lawyer and District Attorney in Kiev. Evgeni lived soberly, and the irony of fate wished that he also died during the days in which Alexander II granted the bannished Decembrists general pardon. His wife has never noticed his homesickness and depressions; he didn't want to place that load on her shoulders.

Nicholas I wanted to limit Western influences at the cost of everything. He died in the Crimean War, on March 2, 1855. The official cause of death was a cold and a nervous shock, but there were rumours that he had poisoned himself.

In April 1858 Nicholas Alexandrovich Frolov became a student in the military academy of St. Petersburg, and his brother Peter followed his steps some years later.

In 1884 Nicholas and Peter were both colonels. Alexander was proud of his children. He died on 6 May 1885, a happy man. He was buried on the Vaganskovskoe cemetery in Moscow, and the inscription on his tomb says, 'Decembrist. Alexander Philipovich FROLOV, 1804-1885.' His wife Yevdokia died in 1901.

Nicholas' daughter Anna Nikolaevna Frolova married Captain Yuri Daniloff in 1895. They had three children, Serge, Michael and Serjoia, and spent much time at the Daniloff estate in the Ukrain. In 1904 Yuri Daniloff was promoted Colonel, and in 1914 he was a General and Substitute Chief of Staff of the Army, under General N.N. Yanushkevich.

In 1906 the freemasons in Moscow and St. Petersburg were organized once more. About 15 prominent Russians, most of them members of the Constitutional-Democrats Party (KaDets), became freemasons in France and subsequently founded new lodges in Russia. In St. Petersburg the lodge 'North Star' was founded, and in Moscow the lodge 'Renewal', both with the greatest caution.

The prominent members of the innovative urban intelligentsia entered these and other lodges: representatives of the Duma, scientists, lawyers, writers etcetera. But 3 years later the Russian secret police discovered their activities, after which the brothers once more had to go underground. During World War I the monitoring of freemasons became less strict. In 1917 there were about thirty lodges all over Russia.

.....

Russian Freemasonry
by Wor. Bro. Dennis Stocks, Barron Barnett Lodge.

Pierre gradually began to recover himself and look about the room and at the people in it. Round a long table covered with black sat some twelve brethren in garments like those he has already seen. Several of them Pierre had met in St. Petersburg society. At the head of the table sat a young man he did not know, with a peculiar cross hanging from his neck. On his right sat the Italian abbi whom Peter had seen at Anna Pavlovna's two years before. There were also present a very important dignitary, and a Swiss tutor who used to be in the Kuragin family. All preserved a solemn silence, listening to the words of the Worshipful Master, who held a gavel in his hand. Let into the wall was a star-shaped light. On one side of the table was a small carpet with curious figures worked upon it; on the other was something resembling an altar on which lay the New Testament and a skull. Round the table stood seven large candlesticks of ecclesiastical design. Two of the Brethren led Pierre up to the Altar, placed his feet at right angles and bade him lie down, saying he must prostrate himself at the Gates of the Temple.

"He ought to receive the trowel first," whispered one of the brethren.

"Oh, quite, please!" said another.

Perplexed, Pierre peered about him with his short-sighted eyes, without obeying, and suddenly doubts rose in his mind. "Where am I? What am I doing? They are making fun of me, surely? Will the time come when I shall be ashamed of all this?" But these doubts only lasted a moment. He looked at the serious faces of those around him, thought of all he had just gone through and realised that there was no stopping half way. He was aghast at his hesitation, and trying to summon back his former feeling of devotion cast himself down..." Tolstoy, WAR & PEACE.

Most of us have read or know about the Masonic sequences in Tolstoy's WAR & PEACE {Part V, Chapters 3 & 4} published in 1868 and, perhaps, although less well known, we have encountered THE POSSESSED by Dostoevsky.

Yet there are other authors such as V.I. Likin, N.M. Karamzin, M.M. Kheraskov, V.I. Maikov, A.N. Radishchev, A.A. Rzhevskii, A.P. Sumarokov and M.M. Shcherbatov who, in the final third of the eighteenth century, were attracted to the Society of Freemasons, joined the fraternity and began to integrate Masonic principles into their writings.

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But to mention Freemasonry in the same context as "Russia" usually invokes an immediate reaction of surprise as if our perceptions of the Craft and the milieu of Russia are and always were antithetical.

We all have images invoked by the mentioning of that nation -- salt mines, the midnight knock on the door, bread queues and hunger, the KGB, the Gulags, mind-numbing cold, missiles, the Berlin Wall, pathological sadness, grey skies, grey cities, grey people, hostile, Enemies!

Yet, on reflection, I'm sure we all realised that the blanket term "Russia" we once used to describe the burgeoning nation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with its 8,649,489 square miles and a population in excess of 250 million spread over fifteen constituent republics was more than these mental images. Of course, that "Russia" no longest exists, though I am sure the term will long continue to be used as a convenient tag for the Commonwealth of Independent States. Yet the CIS is as far removed from our mental "Russia" as the old Russian Empire and it is with that Empire that this paper is primarily concerned.

In this paper, I would like to share with you some observations on the founding of Freemasonry in the old Russian Empire and some of the personalities involved.

There is an apocryphal story that the Tsar of Russia, Peter the Great, acquired a knowledge of Freemasonry during a visit to England in 1698 from Sir Christopher Wren. And it is claimed that Peter participated in the formation of a Masonic Lodge on his return to Russia in which he undertook the role of Junior Warden -- which would be typical of the unassuming Tsar Peter.

In spite of the doubt that Peter's English mentor, Wren, actually was a Freemason, the Russians claim Wren founded English Freemasonry. Robert Gould argued that this legendary basis of Wren's Freemasonry could be 'blamed' on Dr. James Anderson's reference to Wren in his Constitutions of 1738 which are irreconcilable with those in his earlier publication of 1723. A.G. Cross, on the other hand, claimed that much of the mythical character of this story stems from Russian reliance on German source material rather than English.

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I used the word "apocryphal" when referring to Tsar Peter's Lodge. He is attributed with forming a Lodge with the aid of two intimate friends, Lefort of Geneva and Patrick Gordon, a Scottish Guard, in 1717. Unfortunately for this story, both Lefort and Gordon died in 1699!

But, putting this account aside for the moment, there is better agreement that Freemasonry in Russia began with the flamboyant Lord James Keith (1696 - 1758), a descendent from Scottish nobility, banished in 1715 for his support of the Stuart Pretender. He served in the Spanish Army, before moving to Russia in 1728 with the recommendation of Phillip V, and by the early 1740's was a leading Russian (sic) Army General. The Russian Empress Anna appointed him as the military governor of the Ukraine. But, importantly for our story, Keith was made Provincial Grand Master of Russian Freemasonry in 1740 by the Grand Master of England who also happened to be Keith's Cousin. Captain John Phillips had been appointed to this office for Russia in 1731, but there is no evidence to suggest he ever exercised it.

The minutes of the premier Grand Lodge of England for 24 June 1731 record:

"Then the Grand Master and his General Officers signed a Deputation for our Rt. Worshipful Brother John Phillips Esqr. to be Grand Master of free and accepted Masons within the Empires of Russia and Germany and Dominions and Territories thereunto belonging, and his health was drank wishing Prosperity to the Craft in those parts" (Batham, Transactions, p.34).

The 1738 edition of Anderson's Constitutions records Phillips' appointment as being Provincial Grand Master for Russia only. But, as Cyril Batham points out, the appointment of a Provincial Grand Master in those days did not necessarily indicate the existence of a Provincial Grand Lodge, nor even the existence of a single lodge within the Province, and, indeed, we have no reason to believe that Phillips had any lodge operating in this gigantic Province.

The later appointment of James Keith as Provincial Grand Master of Russian Freemasonry, of course, was only two years after the general suppression of the Craft by the Papal Bull of Pope Clement XIII. It is likely that Keith, as a Jacobite, only paid lip service to the English jurisdiction during the one-year

Grand Mastership of his cousin and thereafter influenced Russian Freemasonry towards Germany as the inspirational source for ritual.

One of the powerful influences on Russian Freemasonry was the Rite of Strict Observance. This Rite was sponsored by Baron Karl Gotthelf von Hund (1722-1776), Provincial Grand Master of the Craft in Germany. This system, so-called because of its vows of unquestioned obedience to (unknown) superiors, was based on the myth that Templar secrets had survived the suppression of the Order in 1312 by fleeing to Scotland. It is interesting to note that von Hund, a man of integrity, was convinced that the unknown Grand Master was Charles Edward Stuart. In approximately 1744, von Hund claimed he had been received into the Order of the Temple in Paris in the presence of William, fourth and last Earl of Kilmarnock, who was also Grand Master Mason of Scotland in 1742-1743. Earl Kilmarnock was executed in 1746 for his support of Charles Edward Stuart (Smythe, pp.14-15). So, with these various links to the Stuart cause, you may see the attraction of this Rite to the Jacobean Keith. The Rite as such outlived von Hund by about eighty years.

Another interesting sidelight here was that also in 1740, protocol forced King George II to receive the exiled Keith as a diplomatic representative of Russia.

Boris Telepneff describes Keith as "one of the most remarkable personalities of his time".

In fact, his impact on Russian Freemasonry was such that a song in his praise exists:

After him [Peter the Great] Keith, full of light, came to the Russians; and exalted by zeal lit up the sacrifice. He erected the Temple of Wisdom, corrected our thoughts and hearts and confirmed us in brotherhood. He was an image of that dawn, the clear rise of which announces to the World the arrival of the Lightseeking Queen [presumably Freemasonry].

Keith left Russia to take up service with Frederick the Great (King of Prussia and another Freemason) in 1747. There is no evidence as to why Keith left Russia, but it could have been occasioned by the Austro-French coalition which saw Russia as one of the mainstays against Prussia and Great Britain.

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Keith was killed in 1758 during the Seven Years' War but his groundwork saw to it that Freemasonry continued to grow in Russia. In 1756 the first Russian lodge to actually be consecrated with a name was formed in St. Petersburg under the patronage of the Anglophile Count R.L. Vorontsov, Worshipful Master of The Lodge of Silence. The members of Vorontsov's Lodge included many men who later became famous, viz: Sumarkov (author), Prince Scherbatov (Historian), Mamonov (Literary fame), Prince Dashkov, Prince Golitzin, Prince Toubetzkoy and Prince Meschersky.

That same year (1756) came the first official police investigations of Masonry carried out by the "Secret Chancellery of the Empire" who were investigating the "Masonic Sect" to determine "its foundation, and who constitutes its membership". This had been instigated when rumours began circulating about Freemasonry's foreign and seditious plans.

It is necessary to give background here. Peter the Great had dragged a feudal, agrarian Russia into the 18th century with education reforms, the construction of a navy, a few wars to push things along and a shake up of the bureaucracy based on a European model. This included advancement in the civil service by examination and demonstrated ability rather than by purchase or seniority. Russia's isolation and parochialism was hard to beat and two factions arose. The Westernizers who argued Russia could learn from the West. And, in a way they were correct. Russia was in a unique position to abstract from the West all those ideas and processes that had undergone centuries of trial and error, research and development in the West, adopting the latest concepts after due trials and refinements that had been test bedded in the West. In opposition were the Slavophiles who counter claimed that they were doing very nicely until Peter messed it all up. This Slavophile notion continued for centuries and, in fact, when Karl Marx was contacted by the Russian dissidents in the late 19th century, their argument (and poor old Karl tended to agree with them to keep them happy... after all they seemed to have been the only ones to have read his manifesto!)..the argument was that the innate, rural Muzhik of Russia -- the peasant serf and his accidentally socialist way of life in sharing everything was the model from which Europe could learn, and not the other way around! Mind you, anyone who associated with a Muzhik deserved everything he got along with fleas, starvation and more terminal diseases than you could shake a stick at.

This first investigation exonerated the Craft by finding that its membership was defined as "nothing else but the key of friendship and of eternal brotherhood", the reigning Tsar (Peter III who was later assassinated by his wife Catherine the Great) appears to have joined the movement, and a number of lodges were founded at places where the Tsar would reside -- St. Petersburg, Oranienbaum and so on. It may be imagined that the Emperor did not like to travel to meetings and, considering the state of the Empire's roads in the Spring thaw, who could blame him? Remember, this is primarily an agrarian society.

But there was no real organisational structure to the lodges... that is until Ivan Pertfil'evich Elagin [or "Yelaguin" according to Telepneff and Batham] (1725 - 1793) appeared.

Elagin was an extraordinary bureaucrat, wielding considerable power during the Reign of Catherine the Great who ruled Russia for 34 years -- 1762-1796. Catherine had a great deal of confidence in Elagin and sometimes signed her letters "Mr Elagin's Chancellor". Elagin was also tutor to Grand Duke Paul and one of the first Slavophiles.

Catherine found the English form of Russian Freemasonry quite acceptable and complimentary to the dilettantish atmosphere of her court. However, Elagin admitted that he had turned to Freemasonry in the 1750's out of boredom, curiosity and vanity. He was also attracted by the secrecy of the proceedings and by the hope of meeting high-ranking Russian courtiers and statesmen. Elagin initially perceived no other purpose in Freemasonry than providing a venue whereby discrete meetings could be arranged in order to exploit the friendship of fellow Lodge members for his worldly affairs. He wrote in his memoirs that he found the ceremonies "incomprehensible... strange (and involving) actions .. deprived of sense" and the rituals were full of "unintelligible symbols and catechisms unrelated to reason". (see Grinwald, p.22).

In 1762 a Templar Rite of Melesius sprang up, founded by a Greek Freemason and superposing four High Grades on those of the Craft. It seems to have lasted twenty years; but in 1765 there came a revival of the Strict Observance Rite which dominated Russian Freemasonry.

In 1771 the Engraved Lists of the Grand Lodge of England recorded as #414 their first lodge in Russia -- Perfect Union (or Peace and Union) in St.

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Petersburg. It should be emphasised, however, that although this Lodge had been entered on these lists at the date of the granting of its Constitution (1 June 1771), it had been active in Russia prior to that date. The Masonic position in Russia became even more complicated in 1771 with the introduction from Germany of the Zinnendorf System -- a Christian order of Masonry but a curious mixture of the three Craft degrees and various knightly orders.

On 28 February 1772, Elagin was made Provisional Grand Master of Russia by the Grand Lodge of England, a position he held until 1784. He was only the third Provisional Grand Master the Grand Lodge of England had appointed. For all his initial qualms as to the relevance of the Masonic ceremonies, he soon added to the rituals so that they became somewhat exotic. He argued that the exotic rituals were justified on practical grounds as substitutes for the rites of the Church. He described a Freemason as "A Free man able to Master his Inclinations...(and able) to Subornidate his Will to the Laws of Reason."

By 1774, Elagin's lodges had a membership of over 200 made up of Russian nobles and foreign diplomats and members from all levels of the civil and military service. In that year, five Russian Lodges were added to the Grand Lodge of England's Lists:

- # 466 -- Nine Muses, St. Petersburg
- # 467 -- Urania, St. Petersburg
- # 468 -- Bellona, St. Petersburg
- # 469 -- Mars, Jassy, Moldavia
- # 470 -- Clio, Moscow<>

The list of members published by Telepneff (AQC Volume XXXV) emphasises two important points:

(a) Under Elagin, Russian Freemasonry, with the exception of one or two more-or-less foreign lodges, consisted of the members of the best Russian families who were shaping the destiny of Russia not only at court and in the various government departments, but also in the military and in artistic achievements.

(b) From their position, character and activities, they were sincere and serious about their commitment to Freemasonry.

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The following year, a man who was to become one of the most influential Russian Freemasons joined the Craft. Nicolai Ivanovich Novikov joined Freemasonry in 1775 through Elagin's St. Petersburg lodge, although he refused to submit to the initiation rituals Elagin was using. Novikov was a prodigious organiser as we will see in a moment and one who opened paths of practical activity for the sedentary aristocracy.

There is a character in Russian literature named Oblomov who spends all his days in bed because he can't decide what actions he should undertake first. Mind you, his ideas of action centre about eating, drinking and women. This was an extreme example of the lethargy infecting the aristocracy.

Novikov was a member of the exclusive Izmailovsky regiment (the regiment that had put Catherine on the throne of the Russian Empire) and of Catherine's Legislative Commission. He wrote that he was dissatisfied with Elagin's rituals: that he felt many Russians were playing "Mason" like a child's game. What had become known as "Elagin's System" for the ritual was based on fundamental imitations of English Freemasonry with peculiar and artificial admixtures from other systems. For example, during initiation, or "ordeal" as Elagin called it, the candidate's shirt was covered with blood and his blood literally mixed with that taken from the attending brethren. (Telepneff, AQC XXXV, p.271).

"(Elagin) introduced, or at least authorised the introduction of other degrees, seven in all, the first Craft degrees, followed by:

- 40 -- The Dark Vault
- 50 -- The Scotch Master
- 60 -- The Philosopher's Degree
- 70 -- Spiritual Knighthood."

(Batham, Transactions, p.37)

Elagin defined the Order as:

"The preservation and transference to other generations of some great mystery which has come to us from the most ancient ages, even from the first man, and from which mystery may depend the fate of humanity, if in

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his benevolence to all peoples God would design to open it to the whole world".

For Elagin, this was not only Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, but a mystical doctrine seeking the secret and precious tree of life; the fruits of which we were deprived when exiled from Eden.

But within a year, Novikov had sent Russian Freemasonry into its second and more intense phase by breaking with Elagin's dreamy and mystic quest and founding a new lodge with Moscow as its spiritual centre.

Moscow became the centre for all those opposed to Catherine at this time. The population of the city was somewhere around 400,000 -- twice that of St. Petersburg, and this made it the only city large enough to entertain the illusion of centralised control and uniform national culture for the entire disparate empire. Foreigners found Moscow uncongenial -- grey, bleak, unsmiling. The narrow streets, self-contained suburbs and its historical and geographical closeness to the heart of Russia made it forever suspicious of new ideas.

Under Novikov, Russian Freemasonry turned from the casual, fraternal activities of Elagin's "English" Masonry to the highly dedicated and esoteric orders of Scottish Masonry, introducing closer bonds of secrecy and mutual obligation, special catechisms and vows and new Quasi-Oriental costumes, and rituals. Freemasonry became the first ideological class movement of the Russian Aristocracy and opposed to the atheistic ideas permeating into Russia from France.

To understand the unique religious influences acting on Russian Freemasonry, it is necessary to make a brief explanatory divergence.

Russia had been converted to Christianity very late in history... in fact not until the 10th century -- in 986 AD.

Kiev was the obvious capital as it grew up around the major river obstacle (a series of rapids) in the Dnieper leading to Constantinople. Moscow was a collection of wooden huts at this time...something that didn't change very much even when it DID become the capital and which lead to periodic urban renewal occasioned by catastrophic fires.

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A few centuries earlier, river pirates had forced the locals around Kiev to request mercenary help from the Varangians -- a Scandanivian tribe who came all the way down the river systems from the North, defeated the pirates and immediately took over running the country. Prince Rurik was the first ruler and founder of one of the only two families ever to Rule Russia -- the Rurik's and the Romanov's.

A descendant of Rurik, Prince Vladimir was ruling in Kiev at the time of the conversion of the Rus. He had secured his throne by killing all his brothers. But his grandmother, Olga had earlier converted to Christianity and applied pressure on her grandson to do likewise.

The Primary Chronicle (the Russian version of The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or the Icelandic Kalevala) tells us Vladimir not only had seven wives, but three hundred (!) concubines at Vyshgorod, 300 at Belgorod and 200 at Berestovo. One wonders how he had the time to become the consummate soldier and administrator he really was.

But, being a good grandson and seeing political advantages in conversion, he considered the available options and saw four contenders: Islam, Judaism, the Church of Rome and Byzantine Orthodoxy. So he sent representatives to all four to investigate and have the contenders argue their case.

Well, as a grown man he didn't think much of circumcision, so Judiasm was out. Actually, when he asked the Jews why they had been expelled from Jerusalem, they replied:

"God was angry at our forefathers and scattered us among the gentiles on account of our sins".

Vladimir could see no promise in the faith of a dispersed people.

Nor was Prince Vladimir impressed by the Islamic abstention from alcohol. In fact, his emissaries found Moslem worship to be "frenzied and foul smelling". The Islamic contenders claimed that Mohammed would give each man 70 fair women. With 800 concubines, Vladimir was doing very well, thank you, in this department.

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However, rather than being the also-ran in this contest, Orthodoxy's church service and beautiful churches made a deep impression. (The representatives were shown that most beautiful of all Orthodox temples, the Hagia Sophia).

Again, from The Primary Chronicle:

"The Greeks led us to the buildings where they worship their god and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on Earth. For on Earth there is no such splendour or such beauty and we are at a loss to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty."

Obviously a clear winner since they found no comparable glory in the Roman Church. It may also have helped that women were separated during the service so Vladimir could get some rest! The real point was that concrete beauty and not abstract ideas conveyed the essence of the Christian message to the Rus.

So the Rus were converted en masse in a universal ceremony. But with Christianity came the realisation that their country really had no glorious history. No cultural heritage. So somewhat amazing accounts were derived that insist that, for example, St. Andrew visited Moscow on his way to Rome from Palestine; that Russia was settled by the descendants of Shem and so on.

There also arose the semi-mystical concept of The Third Rome which was a very powerful influence in Russia. This argues that Russia is the repository of the true faith. The three Romes are Rome itself as the First, Constantinople as the Second after the shift in the Church to the east and the fall of Rome in 410 AD, and, as foretold in Revelations, the Third Rome will never be since its creation/foundation heralds the Final Days. Moscow as the Third Rome was an important influence in Russia after their conversion and the fiasco of the Third Crusade in which the western knights attacked Constantinople in a fit of rage and never even got to the Holy Land. Byzantine Orthodoxy had lost the ball on the one yard line and Russia had picked it up!

Also Russia saw itself (and still does) as the saviour of Europe. Offering itself as a sacrifice so the rest of Europe may be protected. Russia was invaded by the Mongols, by Napoleon and by Hitler -- all with horrendous

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loss of life and, perhaps justifiably, they claim their sacrifice saved western Europe. Of course there are problems here since Napoleon for one had defeated most of western Europe before the battle of Borodino. Nonetheless, these ideas reinforced the concept that Russia somehow had acquired a holy mission.

But at the time we were talking about, the typical member of the Russian intelligentsia still longed for the cultural antecedents of other European nations. So Novikov derived a rich pre-history based on St. Andrew who he argued had brought Christianity to Russia before St. Peter's visit to Rome.

The Westernising trends for Russia begun by Peter the Great, reached a zenith with Catherine. She was a cultural vampire, sucking up selected pieces of European culture and she especially drew to her court out-of-context aspects of the French Enlightenment. It may be said that the Russian psyche was such that the spark to evolve a Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert or Montesquieu could never have arisen in Russia.

In the West we have an image of melancholy Russians -- manic depressives to a man. On a whole, that is accurate. The HUGE spaces and absolute loneliness of the Russian forests engender a smallness in individual Russian mentality. Look around, and you can't see the forest for the trees.

In 1756 Russia had entered into a new diplomatic and cultural alliance with France. On her accession to the throne Catherine wrote:

If the gain is not great in commerce, we shall compensate ourselves with bales of intelligence.

So it was, that by the 1770s and 1780s, the Russian aristocracy under Catherine's influence found themselves at the crossroads of their religion and Voltairianism (Vol'ter'ianstvo) by which they meant Rationalism, Scepticism and a vague passion for Reform.

Catherine was thirty-four, Voltaire was seventy. His Philosophy of History had the unprecedented sales' figures of 3000 copies sold in St. Petersburg within a few days of its publication. He quickly became the official historian of the Russian Empire and a kind of saint for the secular aristocracy. Voltarianism became the ruling force in Western Culture much as Latinism had done in the fifteenth century.

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Voltaire led the Deists of the French Enlightenment. Their approach to religion was ambivalent at best. They argued that the only valuable elements in Christianity were those identical with the teachings of the great philosophers. All else was nonsense. The Jews of the Bible, the so-called Chosen People, were primitive peasants with little culture (a sore point here in Russia for reasons outlined above) and with bad morals, thieves and murderers. The Church Fathers were little better; they were ignorant, superstitious, power-hungry, quarrelsome men. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was a collection of incoherent maxims and improbable stories celebrating crimes and absurdities.

They did believe in a Supreme Being -- but one who had created the Universe and retired. Thereafter the whole thing continued to operate by immutable laws. Miracles, for example, were impossible as they violated of the laws of nature.

Changes in the Slavonic Church ritual had already lead to a major schism some hundred years earlier. You may recall the trauma when the Latin Mass was replaced by the Mass in English. Well, in Russia an almost similar revision caused many to simply split away and follow the old ways -- The Old Believers -- who were prepared and did die for their beliefs. To us the changes seem insignificant, invoking the name of Jesus twice instead of three times, reducing the number of genuflections you must make and so on. But one Old Believer, Avatum, lived for 40 years in a hole in the ice as a protest. Others burnt themselves alive in their churches and so on.

But even those who followed the new church rituals were increasingly anxious to dissociate themselves from the agnosticism and superficiality of court life. They found in the Swedish system of Freemasonry a chance for inner regeneration and for a re-discovery of inner truth and the lost unity of the early Christian church.

Why Swedish?

Cross points out that the primary era of English influence on Russian Freemasonry was between 1770 and 1776. By 1770, there were at least twelve major lodges in Eastern Germany and the Baltic. This was to rapidly spread to Prussia and Russia. For example, in 1761 there had been a Field

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Lodge formed in the Russian Army which, at the time, had its Winter quarters in West Prussia and its head-quarters at Marienburg.

King Guastav III of Sweden gave Swedish Masonry a special stamp of respectability by freely flaunting his masonic ties in 1776 during a state visit to St. Petersburg and won the patronage of Grand Duke Paul -- a famous Russian patriot, historian and political rival to and personal enemy of Catherine. This led to a linking of Russian and Swedish Freemasonry into one system when, in 1778, the Moscow Lodge of Prince Troubetskoy joined the Swedish System. Novikov closed his Petrograd Lodges and transferred their activities to Moscow.

Swedish Masonry at this time had nine grades and a secret tenth group of nine members... Commanders of the Red Cross. The strict observance and mystical-military nature of this had appeals in Prussia and by a kind of cultural osmosis spread to Russia. Members of the Swedish groups generally adopted new names as a sign of their inner regeneration and participated in communal efforts to discover through reading and meditation the inner truth of Christianity. I've explained the special role and relationship Russia saw for itself in Christianity. The Russian aristocrats saw this system as a vehicle whereby they could fortify their realm against incursions of the reformist ideas of the French Enlightenment.

On 25 May 1779, a Swedish Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia was officially opened according to the Swedish ritual and thereafter vied for supremacy with the Grand Provincial Lodge of Elagin. Efforts to unite all Russian lodges under one system and one grandmaster (the Duke of Sudermania, brother of Guastav III -- had failed when Elagin refused to hand control of Russian Freemasonry into foreign hands. The two Masonic systems therefore remained separate. Fears were aroused that the Swedish-directed lodges of strict observance were Jesuit-inspired, Catholic and absolutist in tendency. It was their political implications, however, rather than their esoteric aspects which alienated some Russians and many moved to Elagin's system.

In 1782 secret societies were prohibited by the Russian government, but Freemasonry was not included in this decree. Yet, in 1784 Elagin decided to close all lodges under his jurisdiction due to increased political pressures from the Crown.

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More importantly for the Russian Freemasons, Prince Gagarin, a friend of Catherine's son Paul, founded links to the Berlin Lodge Minerva and brought back with him to Russia the teacher of occult lore Johann Georg Schwartz. Schwartz, a Transylvanian by birth, had arrived in Moscow in 1779 to take up a post as professor of German in the gymnasia of Moscow University, a post probably secured through his Masonic connections (see Madariaga, *Russia in the Age...*, p.522)

With Novikov, Schwartz immediately began to transform Russian Masonry. They formed the first secret society in Russia (The Gathering of University Foster Children) and tried to integrate Masonry with the Russian higher educational system. Schwartz was made inspector of a seminary established to train teachers for the expected expansion of Russia's educational system.

Novikov founded his own weekly satirical journal *Truten'* (The Drone) in which he voiced the increasing dissatisfaction of the native Russian nobility with Catherine's imitation of French ways and her toleration of social injustice. In the first issue, Novikov posed a question destined to be the central preoccupation of the Russian Intelligentsia movement. Confessing he had no desire to serve in the army, civil service or at court, he asked what could he do for society?; adding by way of explanation that to live on this earth without being of use is only a burden to it (see Pipes p.256).

His solution was to turn to publicistic and philanthropic work. He and his friends took over the moribund Moscow University Press and transformed the institution itself into a centre of intellectual ferment. The university then had less than 100 enrolled students who listened to uninspired lectures in German and Latin. Novikov organised a public library to be associated with the University and between 1781 and 1784 published more books than had appeared in the entire previous 24 years.

By 1791 the number of readers of the official University gazette rose from 600 to 4000.

Novikov set up the first two private printing presses in 1783. The next year he established the first joint-stock insurance company and organised a surprisingly successful nationwide famine relief system along with the first private insurance company. He published a regular journal *Morning Light* in which he sought to impart the philosophical basis of the classical thinkers.

He also wrote a considerable number of books ranging from children's tales to history.

In all his writings, Novikov's principal target of attack was the "vice" he identified with the Russian 'aristocratic' qualities of idleness, ostentatiousness, indifference to the sufferings of the poor, immorality, careerism, flattery, ignorance and contempt for knowledge. In comparison, his "virtues" were industriousness, modesty, truthfulness, compassion, incorruptibility and studiousness.

The University Press made a considerable profit from Novikov's translations program. Works translated included Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of Old England (a work commissioned by Catherine herself), Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Rousseau's Emile, and Grotius' Discourse Against Atheism (translated by Archbishop Ambrosius of Moscow). For his part, Novikov's literary output included contributions to a number of periodicals, some with a pronounced Masonic slant, others catering to the developing interest in economic or cultural affairs designed to place informative rather than diverting literature in the hands of the noble and burgher families. These included such publications as Gorodskaya i derevenskaya biblioteka ('Town and Country Library') or Poko yushchisya trudolyubets ('The Busy Man at Rest') or his popular series for children Detskoye Cheniye.

But Novikov also held a passionate interest not only in editing and publishing, but in distribution and took a prominent role in the development of the book trade throughout provincial Russia.

At a time when the production of most of the provincial printing presses were unable to find a commercial outlet, censorship records show Novikov's publications were on sale in a number of important provincial towns from Archangel to Tambov, from Nizhniy Novogorod to Irkutsk. Madariaga (Russia in the Age...p 523) has argued that these provincial towns were nearly all towns in which there were Masonic lodges, often under the direction of the Moscow Masons, and many of those who supervised and supplied the book stores were active Freemasons.

With Novikov's organisation of a supporting program, by 1780, he and Schwartz had a number of wealthy patrons. They formed a Sientificheskia ("secret scientific") lodge named Harmony Lodge. This was dedicated to returning Russian society to Christianity. In 1782 the lodge formed a

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"fraternal learned society" with translators to publish selected foreign books. 21 of the 35 society members were drawn from Schwartz's seminaries.

Schwartz, unfortunately, fell under the spell of the Prussian Rosicrucian leaders, Johan Christoph Wollner and J.C.A. Theden, and was initiated into the Rosicrucian Order during a trip to Germany in 1781-1782, and was now empowered to set up his own province of the Order in Russia. Like Novikov, Schwartz had become disillusioned by the charlatanism present in some of the Masonic orders at that time.

On his return to Russia, Schwartz reorganised Harmony Lodge into a Rosicrucian centre, subordinated to Wollner and Theden. Schwartz had been empowered to recruit Freemasons and direct their activities, sending to his superiors in Prussia an annual report on newly admitted brethren and ten roubles for each new recruit. At the Willhelmstadt Masonic Conference in 1782, Schwartz secured the recognition of Russia as the eighth province of European Freemasonry under the grandmaster of European strict observance Freemasonry, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick. Thus, though apparently affiliated to strict observance European Freemasonry under Duke Ferdinand, Schwartz's circle was in fact and possibly without the knowledge of most of its members, subordinated to the Berl in Rosicrucians. The post of provincial grandmaster for this eighth province was vacant, and it was hoped that Grand Duke Paul might occupy it. But Schwartz became chancellor of the Rosicrucians, and de facto head of an expanding network of provincial lodges. He alone knew the full list of Rosicrucians and only the masters of the sixty lodges eventually founded knew that Rosicrucianism was the central purpose of this system.

Largely due to his ascetic self-discipline of so-called healthy food, cold showers and so on, Schwartz died in 1784. He was 33! So much for the healthy life style!!

A new grand Master for the Rosicrucians (Baron Schroder) arrived from Germany to take over Schwartz's role, and numerous young Russians thronged the opposite way to Berlin hoping to unravel the "secret".

Originally, the Fraters of the Blessed Order of the Rosy-Cross were pledged to the relief of the suffering, to attempt the cure of diseases free of charge and to found hospices and retreats from the world for like-minded individuals. They spent their lives in search of truth, the knowledge of man

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and his possibilities and his relationship with other planes of existence beyond the material world.

These noble aims were quickly corrupted and added to so that by the 1680s members were now "scientific dabblers", chemical philosophers, alchemists and astrologers. Any educated person could find a place under the Rosicrucian banner. Primarily they sought the universal solvent (what to keep it in?) the universal cure or remedy and, of course, the transmutation of base metals into gold.

The movement died out in Europe during the Thirty Years' War but, for the Russians, science always had an attraction beyond the material gains it promises. Couple this with a mystical background and you may see what attraction this had for the budding intelligentsia in Russia.

Gradually the so-called "knightly" degrees fell into disuse and the work of the Russian lodges became centred entirely on the Rosicrucian Order. In 1786 Prince Frederick William, a practising Rosicrucian, became King of Prussia, and a bewildering profusion of occult fraternities flooded into a receptive Russia.

It was argued that the world was the supreme temple of Masonry. Rosicrucianism was the final level for which the earlier Masonic degrees were mere preliminaries. To attain this level, one had to flee the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The true task was to find the Light of Adam through inner purification and the dedicated study of the hieroglyphics of nature.

This idea that the world is some huge Rosetta Stone awaiting deciphering by the elite is not new. It goes back to Early Christianity and clearly evident in the 8th century writings of the Venerable Bede.

Schwartz had transformed the casual moralism and philanthropy of the early Russian Freemasons into a seductive belief that heaven on Earth (remember the words of the representatives from Prince Vladimir in the Hagia Sophia?) could be realised through the concentrated efforts of elite thinkers.

Novikov became increasingly uneasy about this turn to the occult which had overtaken Russian Freemasonry. In the late 1780s he proposed the formation of a purely Christian and philanthropic order. His increasing interest in the religious traditions of Old Russia permeated his publications with a kind of

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quasi-religious appeal and he adopted the Old Believer form of counting dates from the Creation rather than from the birth of Christ. He antagonised Catherine by criticising the Jesuits in 1784, accusing them of being a political order thus betraying the monastic ideal. Novikov had portrayed the Jesuits as faithless, power-seeking, aiming to set up a state within a state. His work, in fact was what many 'enlightened' mind considered to be an objective account of the Jesuits.

As the Jesuits' benefactress, Catherine stepped up her attacks on Novikov by writing three anti-masonic plays in which Freemasons were represented as charlatans and deceivers who, like Count Cagliostro, promised their victims philosophic gold, the elixir of life and contact with the world of spirits. Catherine also closed down the Masonic printing presses and finally had Novikov arrested in 1792.

These attacks were not limited to Novikov but included other Russian Freemasons such as Alexander Nicolaevich Radischev. Radischev wrote what is argued to be the first anti-Tsarist book -- A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow. He was sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to exile in Siberia. He was later pardoned by Catherine's son Paul and died in 1802. These attacks were part of Catherine's general disillusionment with the French Enlightenment in the wake of the French Revolution which she took as a personal attack. As an enlightened despot, Catherine felt that the French had bit the hand that had fed them.

Certainly her opinions and distrust of the commoners seemed justified when, in March 1792, Gustav III, albeit an enemy of Catherine's, had been assassinated.

On 10 August 1792 the French monarchy was overthrown and the royal family imprisoned. In France in September that year approximately 1,200 people were massacred, most of them ordinary citizens of no political importance. The French armies were starting to successfully sweep through the Rhineland, annexing territory as they went. In January 1793, the execution of Louis XVI made Catherine physically ill. As an indication of the depth to which Catherine now rejected the French, in March 1794 the sale of French calendars which adopted the new revolutionary neo-classical chronology were banned. France had become a country of ravening beasts knowing only how to pillage and kill. The wave of executions and purge

trials of each wave of revolutionary leaders was not to be seen again until Stalin's trials of the 1930's.

The publication in 1797 of a well-received denunciation of Continental Freemasonry by John Robinson (1739 -- 1805) didn't help the Craft. It was called Proof of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati and Reading Societies. This work had gone into 5 editions within one year of its first publication. It appears Robinson had been initiated into Freemasonry in 1770 before going to Russia as private secretary to Admiral Sir Charles Knowles. As with the other Masonic "Exposures" such as Three Distinct Knocks et cetera, Robinson's work contains interesting (albeit coloured) insights into the activities of eighteenth century Russian Freemasonry -- including what appears to be a Lodge for women!

All this simply reinforced Catherine's concept that Freemasonry was anathema to her continued governing of the country.

Catherine's attitude towards religion was based on toleration through indifference. She had been born a Lutheran, educated by Catholics and Calvinists and welcomed into the Russian Orthodox Church when she married the Tsar. While she was deeply suspicious of the Jews and sectarian extremists, she generally ruled without offending or persecuting other religious orders. She welcomed the intellectual and teaching abilities of the Jesuits and the agricultural expertise of the German pietists. The sects were left alone as long as they recognised her authority.

The later years of Catherine's reign were marked by increasing desperation in the religious communities. Monks fled the monasteries for ascetic settlements and a tribe of wandering prophets toured the outer edges of the Empire.

An extremist group called the Skoptsky arose. As a religious protest and as a purification ritual they would castrate themselves in public. Along with the self-burning Old Believers, and the Flagellants, the Skoptsky should not be seen as a masochistic curiosity. The acts were seen as a new baptism into the elect of the world to come and as a sacrificial atonement for the redemption of a fallen society.

Realising that her rule had aroused popular religious sentiment against the crown, she saw Freemasonry as having the potential to foster a concealed political schism in Russian society.

There is little direct evidence of the political opinions of the Moscow Rosicrucians, though by their behaviour one can deduce that they were not necessarily interested in political change so much as in social reform by means of philanthropy. The austere and high-minded Freemasons rejected Catherine's blatant disregard for the rules of Christian marriage, which contrasted so strikingly with the seeming domestic bliss of the ever-faithful Grand Duke Paul. Novikov, for instance, displayed portraits of the grand ducal couple on the walls of his country house, and the Freemasons sang hymns of greeting to Paul.

In you Paul we see
A ledge of heavenly lore.
In your wonderful union
We read the sign of the angel.
When you are adorned with the crown
You will be our Father.

(Madariaga, Russia in the Age.. pp.529-530)

Was Paul a Freemason? He denied it, but was certainly attracted to some aspects of mystical religion, possibly even to the occult. There was no "Pauline" Party per se, but a general trend in society against Catherine consolidated around her son, Paul. Paul was not adverse to criticising his mother's politics, but stopped short of real sedition.

It seems odd that Catherine should suppress a group supporting loyalty to the sovereign and teaching morality and a belief in God. But Freemasonry had involuntarily become associated with personal enemies of the Empress.

* First was her late husband, Peter III, who had been favourably disposed towards the Craft and Catherine was hostile to any favourites of the late-emperor.

* The Russian Freemasons were aligned to Germany and Frederick the Great was the arch enemy of Catherine.

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* Russian Freemasonry was based on Russian Orthodoxy and opposed by and opposed to the Jesuits -- Catherine's favourites.

* Russian Freemasons were vitriolic in their opposition to the French Enlightenment.

* Freemasons in Russia had the support of Grand Duke Paul, who was now an open, personal enemy and political opponent of the Empress.

*> Novikov's charity and famine relief was believed to be for ulterior political purposes.

The Swedish ambassador, Count Stedingk, wrote that Catherine "felt a truly feminine repulsion towards Masonry". The Empress also had been bitterly hurt when that other paladin of Freemasonry, Gustav III, had attacked her "atheistic and idolatrous' school program".

To the Empress, Freemasonry (which she tended to lump together with Martinists and Illuminati) represented "one of the strangest aberrations to which the human race had succumbed," a strange fad among males only that she scorned as "a mixture of ritual and childish games." Indeed, in 1785-6 she publicly ridiculed its practices and practitioners in three crudely satirical comedies, *Obmanskichik* (The Deceiver), *Obol'shchennyie* (The Deluded) and *Shaman Sibirskiy* (The Siberian Shaman). She could not understand why Novikov, a prosperous nobleman who had retired from state service to become the Empire's pre-eminent private publisher, subscribed to such a bizarre doctrine.

Novikov and Catherine had "fought" a duel of words in the pages of the literary journals. That which Novikov lashed as a 'vice', she preferred to treat as human weakness and called him intolerant and bilious. Novikov responded in more temperate language, but had the temerity to criticise the Empresses' command of the Russian language. This unprecedented exchange between sovereign and subject would have been unthinkable one generation earlier. Catherine and her friends continued to support Novikov's projects throughout the 1770's.

Her amused tolerance had shifted towards overt opposition to the Craft after the 1779 visit to St. Petersburg by Count Cagliostro (the Sicilian Giuseppe

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Balsamo). It is Cagliostro she satirised as "Kalifankerstan" in *The Deceiver* in which he is shown as embezzling gold from his victims.

Moscow had a reputation for gullibility and chicanery, volubility and prodigality -- all vices Catherine felt could be capitalised upon by the Martinists and exploited for their own ends.

It was not especially difficult to channel Catherine's distrust of the "absurd society" of Freemasonry, although the next step in the attack was not aimed at them specifically. Her confessor was in frequent correspondence with Peter Alekseyev of the Moscow Archangel Cathedral. Via this channel, Catherine was informed of the large volume of religious works being churned out on secular printing presses in defiance of the official (lucrative) monopoly of the Holy Synod Press. On 27 July 1787, Catherine prohibited the printing of all prayer books, church books or religious works except those being produced by the authorised presses.

It was found that in Moscow alone, 313 titles of religious works had been published by secular presses (166 of these by Novikov).

In September 1788 Catherine, having studied the reports of the ecclesiastical censors, ordered the return of 299 of the 313 titles to their owners, but banned the other 14 and decreed that future requests to publish religious works be submitted to the Synod. Of the fourteen titles banned, eleven had been published by Novikov. It must be emphasised that they were not banned on political grounds, but on religious objections. As a result, Catherine determined not to renew Novikov's lease on the Moscow University Press when it should expire in 1789.

Novikov had left St. Petersburg in 1779 when he took up a ten year lease on the Moscow University Press. Here he established two private printing presses and a secret press on which Russian translations of the classics of mysticism and alchemy were printed. Yet it was not necessarily these Masonic activities that first attracted Catherine's attention. In 1784, Novikov had published two school textbooks breaching the exclusive licence of the Commission on National Schools which owned the lucrative monopoly on all text books. Novikov claimed he had been authorised by the governor-general to print the books, but was ordered to withdraw and destroy all copies although he was compensated.

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In December 1785, Governor General Bruce and Archbishop Platon were ordered to inspect the books published by Novikov, to ensure they contained no "ravings", "stupid lucubrations" or "schism". Platon was also asked to determine Novikov's Christian beliefs.

The Archbishop not only voiced his confidence in Novikov, he reported that:

"I pray the Lord to let us find another Good Christian such as Novikov, not only in your flock and mine, but in the whole world" (see Grinwald, p.26).

The moral opposition to Catherine and what she stood for may explain Platon's ambivalence. In spite of his disapproval of Masonic "occult" literature, he probably felt closer to Novikov and his Masonic friends than to the secular "enlightenment" of Catherine, particularly in the field of education.

But Platon listed twenty-three of Novikov's books which he believed sought to introduce religious error. For instance, he found one title, *On the Ancient Mysteries and Secrets of All Peoples*, praised pagan rites found sinful by the Church and declared that the Church derived its ritual and sacraments from paganism. Yet of the twenty-three, Catherine eventually banned only six -- all of them Masonic in content.

After the appointment of the new chief commandant for Moscow in February 1790, Catherine began increasing administrative pressures on Freemasons although no definite command of prohibition was issued.

Panicked by the excesses of the French Revolution, she wrote that the Masons were at the forefront of a new Raskol -- a schism -- in Russian society.

Evidence for this came in the form of a report of an unauthorised book treating religious matters from the perspective of the schismatic Old Believers sect. With clear "evidence" of past publishing transgressions, Catherine ordered both Novikov's Moscow residence and provincial estate searched for copies of the book or others like it.

Although he had been given a "comprehensive and immediate" command to carry out this search on 13 April 1792, Prince Prozorovskii, a former general notorious for his blunderbuss approach to civil affairs, waited eight days

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(until Catherine's sixty-third birthday) before sending officials to carry out the Empresses' command. The search party did not find the offending title, but discovered other prohibited books and several clandestinely published Masonic titles. Novikov and his books were escorted by a company of hussars to the Schlisselburg Fortress for interrogation.

It should be noted that Catherine had planned Novikov's arrest at a time he was out of Moscow. She had to keep moving him around since in every city in which he was jailed, popular support for him soon arose. Suspecting a conspiracy of fanatical "Martinists", well-financed and well-connected noblemen with ready access to the newly expanded medium of public expression, the Empress sought to forestall Novikov's martyrdom (by suicide or otherwise) and to squelch negating publicity by keeping his associates in the dark and silencing any imitators. Count Rrazumopusky wrote that Novikov was a poor man plagued by piles and besieged as if he was a city.

It has been suggested by some authors that Novikov was hounded until some valid reason could be found to arrest him in order to stifle his independent social and publishing activities. Yet the evidence does not support this. The only works of his that were banned were those Masonic titles judged by Archbishop Platon to be "harmful" seven years earlier.

Catherine's special animus against Novikov is difficult to understand. It is true that he had made satirical attacks against the throne in his journals during the 1770's and his social activities tended to be independent from the control of the Crown. He had engaged in large-scale charitable activities on borrowed money, to help both landowners and serfs during a famine. But while Catherine's distrust was fed by the enormous sums of money Novikov seemed to be able to call upon and dispose in these charitable works (he had debts in excess of 700,000 roubles), she continued to subsidise his journals and his schools founded by his Masonic friends in St. Petersburg.

Novikov was never tried, but the accusations against him were listed in the sentence eventually pronounced. He was charged with holding secret meetings at which people swore submission to the Duke of Brunswick; he was accused of corresponding in cipher with Wvllner (who was a Prussian Minister) and with attempting to lure a "Certain Person" (presumably Grand Duke Paul) into becoming a Freemason. He was condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment in Schlisselburg. But was allowed to take with him his private physician (the Rosicrucian M.I. Bazayansky) and his servant. The entourage

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was allocated one rouble per day for their keep (cf. 3 kopeks for ordinary prisoners).

Catherine's arrest of Novikov marks the end of her flirtation with the Enlightenment. Against the background of the French Revolution, the assassination of Gustav III, and the imagined threats to her own life, the existence of a group, orchestrated by her enemies (the Prussians) apparently with seemingly unlimited financial resources, inspired by Masonic tenets which could range from extreme egalitarianism to alchemical and occult "lucubrations" and apparently ready to dethrone her in the interests of Paul, may have seemed a more real threat to the ageing Catherine than can be appreciated today.

Yet Catherine's treatment of Novikov, notably the severity of his punishment compared to the leniency with which others among the Moscow Rosicrucians were treated, is somewhat inexplicable. Certainly, Paul believed himself to be partly responsible for Novikov's harsh treatment and one his first acts on accession to the throne was to have Novikov released.

It is true, however, that other Freemasons who were "punished" (N.Trubetskoy, I. Lopukhin and I Turgenev, for example were merely rusticated on their country estates) had not been directly involved in the efforts to enlist Paul into the M^Asited Paul on behalf of Novikov, escaped scott free. Madariaga (Russian in the Age...p.530) has suggested that this may be due to the fact that Trubetskoy et al were members of the highest aristocracy and Bazenov was too lowly.

A number of booksellers were arrested, interrogated and released with a warning. Some 20,000 copies of the mainly Masonic works confiscated when Novikov was arrested were burnt in 1793.

On Catherine's death in 1796 the situation for Freemasonry changed. Paul I not only abolished all prison sentences imposed on Freemasons (in including Novikov) but rewarded, protected and even consulted them on State affairs although Freemasonry remained officially prohibited. In 1797 an edict had been passed forbidding secret meetings and, although Freemasonry was not specifically mentioned, Paul elicited a promise from all Worshipful Masters not to open any lodges. It has been suggested that this may have been due to certain rivalries between Masonic Templar degrees and the Maltese Knights.

Paul declared himself Grand Master of the Knights of Malta on 16 December 1798. (See Speth AQC VIII, p.232).

Novikov returned to Moscow, but his publishing days were over. He died on 31 July, 1818, aged 74. Yet he lived to see some of the Russian Freemasons rise to become outstanding generals against Russia's enemies such as Turks and Napoleon. Men such as Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kutuzov and some of the world's greatest authors such as Alexander Pushkin.

Alexander I (1777-1825) succeeded Paul after the latter's assassination on 11/12 March 1801. Alexander annulled the decree prohibiting all secret societies and became an initiate of the Craft. Dormant lodges were revived and new ones established. Those members of the Craft still attached to the spirit of mysticism that had permeated Russian Freemasonry under Novikov and Schwartz appear to have been especially active at this time.

Christian mysticism was in vogue and imparted a significant influence on fashionable society in St. Petersburg. The Rosicrucians opened a lodge (Neptune) in Moscow in 1803. A new Grand Lodge was formed in 1810.

Russian Freemasonry began to move in opposite directions -- a Conservative movement represented by the St. Petersburg and Moscow mystics and a Liberal one following French fashions and ideas (again!). A third "force", the revival of the strictly Christian Swedish Rite, reinforced the autocratic regime with its support of Autocracy and Orthodoxy.

Yet, in 1810, the Ministry of Police demanded the leaders of Russian Freemasonry produce their constitutions and rituals. As a result of this investigation, a member of the Lodge United Friends (also General Lieutenant aide-de-camp of the Emperor) was appointed Minister of Police. This was perhaps more subtle than it first appears. If the government wished to investigate Freemasonry, but also respected oaths of secrecy, who better to investigate them than a Minister of Police who was also a Freemason?

At the beginning of 1812, a Book of Constitutions had been prepared for the guidance of Freemasons. The thrust of the contents was clearly in patriotic support of the Tsar. Under these rules, none but Christians of Russian nationality were to be admitted to high office in the Craft and at the head was to be a Prefect, not responsible to his brethren, but to the Minister of Police and the Emperor himself. This was, perhaps, in opposition to the

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Swedish system. The Grand Lodge had now become dominated by the strict autocracy of Alexander and his Police Minister.

Following the defeated Napoleonic Armies back through Europe, the army of Tsar Alexander I was exposed even more to European ideas of freedom and reform. In 1814, 571 Russian Freemasons (including 62 Generals and 150 Colonels) met with their French brethren in Paris. On their return, the ground swell against the autocracy continued to consolidate.

While the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Forces during the Napoleonic Wars, Prince Michael Kutusov, was a prominent Freemason along with many of the high-ranking officers (all of whom had served their country with distinction), Tsar Alexander became increasingly influenced by Prince Metternich who was convinced the Craft in Russia now harboured highly suspicious members of secret political organisations.

Strong political elements had certainly penetrated the lodges. Masonic equality was misunderstood and attracted into the Craft men who were resolved to unite against class privileges and to end the autocracy with emancipation. Telepneff (AQC XXXVIII, p. 36) writes that conclusive proof exists that a dangerous political element had entered Russian Masonry.

In August 1815 the Grand Lodge Astrea was formed with a predominant German character and Russian Freemasonry began to lose its national characteristics. Its Statutes and Rituals (in French) occupied 154 pages. Also that year, a Swedish Provincial Grand Lodge was formed in Russia to work the Swedish Rite which regarded the so-called "higher" degrees as the acme and perfection of Masonry (see Batham, p.61). Astrea confined its attention to the three Craft Degrees and left its member lodges free to work whatever additional degrees their members wished. By 1818 there were about 1300 Russian Freemasons of whom about 1000 lived in St. Petersburg and met in twenty Lodges.

Signs of internal discord and corruption were becoming apparent. Within five years, no less than five different Rituals were being used in Lodge procedures. Igor Andrevich Kushelev, Lieutenant General and Senator, Deputy Grand Master of Astrea in 1820, presented the Emperor with a report on Freemasonry.

The conservative Kusheleov's ideal was the Swedish Rite as originally introduced into Russia. He disapproved of the "modern" innovations destroying true Masonic doctrines and saw a danger of the Lodges becoming nests of "Illuminati" with revolutionary ideals. Kusheleov's attempts to restore the original ideals in Astrea were vigorously opposed by members holding Masonic and political ideals different to him. He saw his duty to Freemasonry and the government was to report what he felt was a danger.

His closeness to Freemasonry and high position within the Craft carried considerable weight with the Emperor. (See Telepneff AQC XXXVIII, pp.41-59 for a translation of Kusheleov's Report).

Kusheleov recommended that Freemasonry be placed even further under the control of the government or, alternatively, that all lodges be permanently closed.

The lodges had been constantly under police supervision and the Emperor must have been aware of the latest undesirable tendencies and doubtful membership of a number of lodges. In 1822, Count Gaugwitz (a Prussian Mason), like Kusheleov apparently distinguishing between useful and harmful Masonry, presented the Emperors of Russia and Austria with a memorandum strongly advising the closure of the lodges in the two countries, although the King of Prussia was extending his protection to all Prussian lodges.

Nine months after the presentation of the Kusheleov Report, on 1st August, 1822, Alexander I closed all Masonic lodges in Russia with the exception of Lodge Ovid, because it had been transferred to the Rumanian Jurisdiction. There must have remained an underground movement since the five Decembrist leaders are said to have been Freemasons and the Decembrist incident did not take place until 3 years later.

That Freemasonry continued in spite of the ban seems likely since Nicholas I, successor to Alexander I, confirmed the decree prohibiting Freemasonry on April 21, 1826.

It is wrong, however, to consider Russian Freemasonry perished from an external blow. Without healthy social growth, a dynamic vitality and clearly-defined aims, Russian Freemasonry was self-defeating. Clearly nineteenth century Freemasonry in Russia possessed none of these virtues. Political

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aims, albeit laudable and well-intentioned, and members admitted into lodges who had no concept of true Masonic aims or ideals set the fuse for self-destruction. The official moves were inevitable.

After this time, even the word Freemason was erased from the dictionaries. As evidence of this let me quote from the diary of a Soviet official.

One day in my native Russian village when I was 6 years old, grandmother Nadezhda berated me for riding our ancient palomino with a hackamore instead of a bridle. "Some Day you'll get yourself killed" she grumbled, "running round like a wild FRY MUSSON!"

Who was FRY MUSSON, what sort of monster was he? I had no way of knowing and I was not about to find out. In babushka's intonation, it sounded like the name of one of the characters in her stories about demons and other 'unclean ones' who for some reason always became active on nights I had done something wrong.

When I was 14 and in the 5th grade, I again heard that long-forgotten mysterious word. This time it was pronounced in German-accented Russian as FRIEMASSON. Our History teacher was lecturing on the era of Frederick the Great and the 7 years war. "At that time," he elaborated "there appeared in Western Europe a mysterious group of people who called themselves FRIEMASSONS. Nobody knew who they were or what their aims were. One thing, however, was known -- they preached peace and equality among people."

In Russia in those days of my childhood, peace and equality among people were not exactly household expressions so the teacher cut short the lecture, leaving Freemasonry hanging in the Air."

But at the time when Alexander issued his ukase banning the Lodges, a cache of information remained in the Rumzantev Museum in Moscow. These works allowed Tolstoy (who was not a Freemason) to thoroughly research the subject and make his character of Pierre Bezukhov a Freemason in War and Peace. In fact, the descriptions of Freemasonry are such that D.K. Chamberlain has used the information in Tolstoy's novel to reconstruct a Russian initiation ceremony.

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[You will note Tolstoy's consummate skill as a storyteller. He has captured a small scene within that scene quoted at the beginning of this paper; a scene with which we today must all be familiar -- that unneeded prompt from the floor of the lodge regarding procedure.]

At the beginning of 1906 about fifteen members (primarily Kadets -- members of the Constitutional Democratic Party) joined Lodges in France. On returning to Russia, they formed two Provincial Lodges -- The Polar Star in St. Petersburg and Regeneration in Moscow. Both were opened in May 1908 by representatives from the High Council of the Grand Orient of France sent especially for that purpose. Other French Provincial Lodges were in these cities and at Kiev and Nijni-Novgorod.

As Russia moved towards a more pluralistic society in tune with rapid industrial developments, unchanging Tsarist policies were clearly incompatible with the needs of Russian society. Peasant revolts, worker demonstrations and revolutionary movements accelerated. A bewildering array of unrealistic artistic and philosophic concepts arose in the disquieting, yet exhilarating milieu of brooding disaster. Romantic perspectives were broadened by philosophers attaching naturalism and claiming to possess the ability to penetrate the banality and ugliness of day-to-day life at all social levels and to express the inexpressible.

The earlier revolutionary movements of the Populists and Nihilists were rejected and a trend developed among society to introduce innovations into a modernised Christianity. The common factors among the diverse attempts to instill a new religious consciousness were a dissatisfaction with the atheism of the proceeding generation and a sense of the coming apocalypse. Freemasonry co-existed with Hinduism, Buddhism, Spiritualism, Alchemy and Magic. Atheism was now fashionably out-of-date and of questionable social taste, almost offensive in a contemporary society that accepted fads of an extraneous nature (such as barefoot dancing) with gusto and enjoyed a wide infatuation with poets worshipping art for art's sake, Aesthetes, Demonists and Mystics. Ancient, correctly-performed rituals acquired a greater importance than the fulfilment of moral commitments.

For a period of time prior to the first Russian Revolution (1917), the Grand Orient of France (considered irregular since 1877) attempted to recreate its own style of political Freemasonry in the last days of the Russian Empire. As early as 1908, Polar Star Lodge in St Petersburg and two other lodges (in

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Moscow and Warsaw respectively) followed the Grand Orient's political agenda.

In 1909 the authorities became aware of the revitalised existence of these lodges and their activities went underground until 1911. These "activities" were not Masonic per se but allied towards the abolition of the autocracy and establishing a democratic regime. It was almost as if Russian Freemasonry was intent on reliving the exact events which had lead to the demise of the Craft in their country one hundred years before.

Gradually, however, this again began destroying Russian Freemasonry. The Craft was quickly regarded as a nest of atheistic revolutionaries and/or a formidable centre of Jewish organisations designing against Christianity and ready to overthrow any lawful government and foster any revolt.

In 1911, Masonic meetings were resumed on a more judicious basis. That year, the Grand Orient of France acknowledged the creation of a new "Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia". Due to their affiliation and overt political activity, this "Grand Lodge" (sic) was not recognised by Freemasonry's Regular Jurisdictions. By 1913-1914 there were about forty "Lodges" operating but with increasing political disputes raging between their members who belonged primarily to the Constitutional Democratic Party (the Kadets). On the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, twenty-eight lodges existed.

"An independent lodge of the so-called Martiniste Rite was formed among the entourage of Czar (sic) Nicholas II under the name of 'The Cross and the Star'. Nicholas was said to have been a member of this lodge, which suspended its work in 1916. Other Martiniste lodges opened ... 'Apollonius' in St Petersburg (1910), 'St John' in Moscow (1911), 'St Andrew' in Kiev (1912). A very curious lodge existed among the Russian Navy League, calling themselves 'Philaletes'; beside philanthropic and intellectual work, it pursued a political aim in opposition to that of the Grand Orient lodges, namely the support of the monarchy of Nicholas II. Probably this movement arose in connection with the Paris branch of the Swiss Order of the Chevaliers 'Philaletes' which established two lodges in St Petersburg: 'The Pyramid of the North' and 'The Star of the North'. Both pursued studies of mysticism and symbolism." (Boris Telepneff, An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry, cited by Angel.)

With Russia losing the war against the Axis powers, and food riots rapidly spreading throughout Petrograd and Moscow, on March 2, 1917 the Tsar abdicated in favour of a provisional government under the initial control of Prince Lvov. On July 16, Alexander Kerensky, a Freemason and one of the Kadets, acquired control of the provisional government. Kerensky hoped to restore order in the capital and opened discussions both with General L.G. Kornilov and the Socialist factions in the government. But rumors spread that Kornilov was marching on Petrograd intending to halt any such discussions or rapprochement with the Socialists by force of arms. Amid this confusion, Lenin, who had returned from exile with the help of the Germans, made his momentous move and the Bolsheviks seized control of the government and the country during the night of October 24-25. Kerensky fled the country.

After October 1917 most members of the existing Russian lodges who could went into exile and formed lodges in Berlin and in France. The Russian Civil War lasted four bitter years. By 1920, a wave of Russian intellectuals, dignitaries, professors, scientists, doctors, artists, lawyers and White Russian Army officers who had fled to France had joined Polar Star and four other Russian Grand Orient lodges operating in that country. The regular French Grand Lodge picked up many of these Russian emigres and initiated them into such lodges as the Anglo-Saxon Lodge in Paris. At one time there were six Russian-speaking lodges in Paris. It was hoped that Russian Freemasonic traditions could be restored and eventually returned to their homeland. But the number of Russian Lodges in France was subsequently reduced to two -- Astrie Lodge #10 and Vox Ucrainae #117 -- both practising a Russian version of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Russian and Ukrainian respectively (See Grinwald p.28). These lodges remain active at the National Grand Lodge residence at Neuilly. In December 18, 1993, the Rossiya Consistory #563 was revived by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of France Supreme Council of the 33o in Paris as prescribed by the Supreme Council of Lausanne in 1922.

The Scottish Rite Supreme Council of the Grand Lodge of France (later recognised as that of the National Grand Lodge of France after the former became irregular during the 1960s) was entrusted with the orderly formation of a future Grand Lodge of Russia by the Supreme Council of Lausanne in 1922. The regular Freemasons of France hosted Russian lodges as early as 1923, the first of which was called Lodge Astrea, after the Grand Lodge which had closed one hundred years earlier. Telepneff argues that

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Freemasonry continued to operate in Russia "to the present hour" which was 1922 when this particular article was published in AQC (Volume XXXV).

In 1920, The Queensland Freemason carried a "Declaration of Principles" from "members of the great administrative Committee of the G.L. of Ukrainia" (sic). The declaration had been made to "acquaint all the regular Masonic authorities in all countries th at the members of the just and perfect Masonic Lodge 'Stus Andraeus Praevocatus', at the Or. of Kiew (sic) in solemn constituent assembly, held at the Or. of Kiew (sic)" on September 18, 1919, decided and proclaimed the existence of a superior, independent Masonic authority within the limits of the democratic Republic of Ukrainia (sic) under the name of "The G.L. of Ukrainia St. Andraeus Praevocatus within their H.Q. at the Or. of Kiew" (sic).

The communique goes on to outline the basic tenets of Freemasonry and closes with a request to all regularly constituted "G.C.Ms of all rites in the World" for recognition as a "superior Masonic authority and an independent power within the boundaries of the Republic of Ukrainia (sic), and to appoint their guarantors of mutual friendship". The note closes with the statement that, until its own "statutes, general rules, rites and mementoes shall have been drawn up, the G.L. of Ukrainia (sic) will make use of those of the G.L. of France".

As a brief aside relating to the Ukraine: "In 1900 the first Ukrainian Masonic Congress was held, and on January 17 the Grand Lodge of Ukraine was first formed. In 1919, during the brief existence of the independent pre-Soviet Ukrainian Republic, the Grand Lodge of the Ukraine proclaimed its existence, uniting seven principal lodges (which corresponded with the seven districts of the nation). It was said to have had 6000 members. Prior to the new republic's fall to the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1920 , the Ukrainian grand Lodge entered into fraternal relations with the Grand Orient of Italy, and sent delegates to other countries. The unfortunate advent of the Bolshevik regime forced the Ukrainian lodgews to go into retirement once again." (Boris Telepneff, An Outline of the History of Russian Freemasonry, cited by Angel.)

At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow 1922, a resolution was passed which required all Communists belonging to the Fraternity to sever their connection without delay or leave the Party. Leon Trotsky called Freemasonry "a bourgeois ideological conception

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contrary in its principles to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and tending to establish a state within a state". No Communist who had been a Freemason could be appointed to a Party post during a two-year-period after such severance of relationship. Yet Maxim Gorky, widely known to have been a Freemason, continued in favour with the new regime.

In 1926, a Russian Freemason named Astromov who was less concerned with orthodox Craft Freemasonry than he was in Rosicrucianism, wrote to Stalin, requesting him to legalise Freemasonry in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, Stalin continued to believe that Leon Trotsky was an enthusiastic Freemason (in spite of Trotsky's comments at the 1922 Congress related above) and ordered Astromov's arrest. Astromov had founded lodges in Leningrad, Moscow, Tiflis and Kiev. He and thirty other Freemasons (including all the officers the four lodges) were imprisoned. Astromov died shortly afterwards aged 76.

In 1929, Pierre Mikhailovich Kaiser, Professor of Oriental Languages at the Moscow Institute, and two other Freemasons were executed by a firing squad after an agent of the NKVD discovered that Masonic meetings were continuing in secret. (Batham, Scottish Year Book, p.64).

Did Freemasonry, as such, continue in any active form? Some Masonic researchers/writers would have us believe so.

Zelchenko refers to "V.V.Arnold's" interrogation by State Prosecutor Vyshinsky during Arnold's trial on 23-30 January 1937 and points out a number of anomalies in Arnold's testimony with regard to his connection to Freemasonry. By selectively choosing his references from the trial transcript, Zelchenko implies that Arnold's "Freemasonry" was alive and well (sic) in the U.S.S.R. at that time.

Unfortunately not so. If you look further at those transcripts, you will not only see that anything Arnold said must be ignored, but that he joined (or so he said) the Craft in AMERICA and the reference adds nothing to understanding the presence or not of Freemasonry in the U.S.S.R. during the late 1930's.

It is interesting, however, to look at Arnold and his trial as an insight into the Purge Trials of the 1930's. On a trip to the city of Prokopyevsk in 1934, the car carrying Molotov went off the road, its right wheels landing in a ditch.

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None of the passengers were hurt in any way. But the incident subsequently provided grounds for a trial claiming an assassination attempt had been made on Molotov's life. The ditch became a ravine and the chauffeur was claimed to be in the pay of Trotskyites and dedicated to assassinating Molotov. Arnold was the chauffeur.

In thirty pages of trial transcript we learn that Arnold had been born in Petrograd and acquired three surnames by the age of seven. He wandered to Finland, Germany and Holland while in his teens and to Norway and England during the First World War (under yet another surname). He was conscripted on his return to Russia, but deserted and jailed for six months. Conquest (p.158) points out that the Prosecutor has considerable trouble at this point in the trail in sorting out Arnold's names, ranks, the regiments in which he served and so on. It seems Arnold managed to steal some railway passes and made it to New York under yet another name via Vladivostok. In the U.S. he claimed he joined the army (though he could not speak English) and it was in America that he enrolled as a Freemason (as well as a member of the Communist Party of the United States). Twenty three pages of this farrago goes on and on. The only incriminating evidence brought out is that he concealed his Masonic connections from the Party. He was shipped to Russia with a group of American specialists being sent to Kemerovo. After serving as an office manager in Western Siberia, as controller for water transport, working in a commercial department, then in charge of a "telephone system", Arnold contacted the Trotskyites in 1932 after being dismissed from his job for anti-Soviet remarks.

In short, nothing the poor dupe said can be believed. He was shot in 1941.

But whatever these later motives, one hundred years earlier, Russian Freemasonry had gone through its important stages of development and persecution under Catherine.

Catherine's attacks on Freemasonry were, perhaps, more acute than she realised. Freemasonry had established links to other broader disaffected elements and, while the Craft was neither political nor religious, it had a profound influence in both these areas. The lodges filled that niche in the culture of aristocratic Russia previously held by the monasteries. Lodges provided islands of spiritual intensity and cultural activity within the bleak autocratic environment. Thus it is not surprising to find the five leaders of

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the Decembrist Revolt (so called because it started on Christmas Day) in 1825 were all Freemasons.

Baigent and Leigh in *The Temple and the Lodge* imply (p.264) that Masonic involvement in this Revolt was the cause of the ban on all lodges. But you will note that the interdict had been in place at least three years before that incident in St. Petersburg 's Senate Square.

The Russian intellectuals believed that there was such a thing as TRUTH and in search of it they joined higher Masonic orders and researched Western ideas with a special intensity. Foreign books became akin to sacred objects that were thought to contain redeeming powers or the way to redemption. This failure to decode nature was ascribed to their own fallen sinfulness.

The most important assumption that can be identified in eighteenth century Masonic Russian literature (see Baehr) is that knowledge inevitably leads to virtue and hence that all sin and error result from insufficient comprehension of oneself, of nature and of God. The Freemasons sought this knowledge (premudrost') through the Lodge, which they called the Temple of Knowledge (kram premudrosti), and through concerted efforts towards self-knowledge.

The flight to the occult, to arcane sources of medieval alchemy, the Jewish Kabala and the Egyptian "mysteries" for this knowledge was partly due to their virginal enthusiasm for these ideas and a sheer lack of background in philosophical thought.

In Russia, the Freemasons were seeking a solution to an external human quest: an escape from the banality, mortality and immorality of life in their milieu. Freemasonry was seen as an alternative to the "profane" life of Catherine's Court by ritually constructing a sacred place where men could overcome death and be reborn to a better, more satisfying life.

In attempting to spread this ethos, there was the inevitable turn to or involvement in the politics of the nation. This brought suspicion and, ultimately, punitive action from the authorities.

There is an entrenched belief that Communism (as personified by the Soviet Union) is the antithesis of Freemasonry and whenever a country falls to

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Communist influence, the Craft is banned. This is partly true -- Cuba being a notable exception. But let us also remember that the Craft was persecuted and banned in some European nations long before the rise of the Soviets.

In Poland the Three Brothers Lodge had been established in 1729 and The Virtuous Samaritan Lodge in 1737. Both of these were suppressed in 1738 by the Papal Bull of Pope Clement XIII. Catherine the Great had participated in the Partition of Poland in 1772 and took the leading role in the further partitions of that unhappy country in 1793 and 1795 (see Berendt). The Grand Lodge of Poland (independent of the Grand Lodge of England since 1769) had become extinct in 1772 with the First Partition. The National Grand Orient of Poland had reformed in 1784 only to be dissolved with the Third Partition in 1795. Lodges formed during the Napoleonic Wars were closed in 1813 with the fall of Napoleon although certain charitable aspects of the Craft's work continued until 1815 when part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was incorporated into the Russian Empire with limited autonomy. The 1821 decree by Tsar Alexander I sent Polish Freemasonry into limbo until Polish independence in 1918.

Another example is Hungary, where Freemasonry (consisting of the Strict Observance Rite which arrived c.1760 and other lodges following foreign constitutions) was suppressed by Royal edict in 1795 and the Craft was only re-established in 1867. By 1917, there were some ninety-one lodges operating. I am pleased to see that the Craft in Hungary, banned in the 1950's by the Communists, has been revived. On 27 December 1989, the Grand Lodge of Austria joined their Hungarian brethren in "Rekindling the Lights " and consecrated the Symbolic Lodge of Hungary with the Installation of a new Grand Master and his officers.

It is interesting to note that The Bulletin for 10 September 1991 carried a report that one of the coup leaders against Mikhail Gorbachev, Valery Boldin (Gorbachev's closest personal aide who kept his schedules and guarded his door against unwanted visitors) was found to have an extensive library of anti-Masonic works and books dealing with "convoluted Masonic conspiracies like those favoured by right-wing extremists".

The January 1993 edition of Emessay Notes of The Masonic Service Association of the U.S. carried an exciting news item that the Grand Lodge of Alaska was pursuing the challenge of introducing Masonry to Eastern Russia. With the relaxation of travel between "Russia" (Siberia) and the U.S.

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side of the Bering Sea, the Alaskan Grand Lodge is seizing the opportunity to initiate new friendships with their neighbours. The Alaskans, however, are under no illusions as to the difficulty of their project. Inflation and economic conditions in the C.I.S. make it impractical to establish new lodges in the Eastern C.I.S. under Alaskan jurisdiction at this stage. Grand Master John H. Grainger has made a number of visits to Magadan and made plans to tour Eastern Russia in 1994. Magadan is a small sea port on the northern shore of the Sea of Okhotsk west of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The Alaskans have instigated a program of providing information about the Craft to potential candidates.

Emulation in its issue for 2 September 1993, carried an article which reported that, on September 8, 1992, regular Freemasonry returned to the Russian Empire as Grand Master Michel Garder of the National Grand Lodge of France (GLNF) and his Grand secretary, Yves Trestournel, witnessed Moscow University professor and Worshipful Master George Dergachev install the officers of Harmonie Lodge #698 as his first act in their new lodge hall in the Russian capital.

The hall itself was a converted apartment within Moscow, and the Freemasons who met that evening doubled their numbers to twenty-four, as they initiated a group of enthusiastic men into the fraternity, two of whom had previously been members of an irregular Grand Orient of France lodge. Perhaps as early as 1988, the Grand Orient had been creating lodges left and right throughout eastern Europe since the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In relation to the ceremonies enacted by Harmonie Lodge, Actualities (the newsletter of the Grand Loge Nationale Francaise) had earlier stated:

"It is necessary to remember that, in similar missions, discretion is paramount. We do not understand here in what framework they have been able to work in order to be protected, but this working was effective thanks to the experience of Colonel Garder and of the Russian Brethren, who persevered throughout the grey period.....

"Twelve uninitiated men saw the light thanks to the working of the ritual of Lodge Astree, carefully preserved for just such an occasion as this".

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Harmonie Lodge began meeting once a week after this, making plans to start an information campaign to attract worthy candidates to the regular Masonic fraternity with the hope of creating additional lodges in St Petersburg, Moscow and Novosibirsk.

A year later, in September 1993, the GLNF consecrated its second constituent Lodge in Russia in St Petersburg and has subsequently consecrated two other lodges. Looking to the future, the name "National Grand Lodge of Russia" has been registered with the Ministry of Justice in Moscow.

The GLNF began appealing to other regular Grand Lodges to aide in consolidating these gains in Russia by asking for regular visits by experienced Masons to offer instruction and ensure regularity. The GLNF has proposed a joint venture with United States Grand Lodges prepared to visit and has proposed to offer financial assistance to Freemasons prepared to visit Russia for these purposes.

The four lodges in Russia are:

Harmonie Lodge, #698, Moscow. [meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6:30pm]

Gamaioun Lodge, #801, St Petersburg. [meets on the third Wednesday of each month.]

Lotos Lodge, #802, Varonej [meets on the second and third Tuesdays of each month.]

Nouvelle Astree, #803, Moscow. [does not have a fixed date as of this article.]

Conclusion: Probably nowhere else in Europe did Freemasonry play such a significant a role in the development of the cultural life of three or four generations as it did in Russia. This may be due to the predominantly Feudal/Agrarian milieu and the lack of an originality in Russian culture; it may also reflect the absence of Orthodox works in theology written in a lay style and vocabulary and the dearth of sufficient intellectual and emotional stimulation to satisfy a more discriminating audience.

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Much of higher order Freemasonry in Russia was strangely applicable to a revolutionary tradition. Here you had a small circle of men, meeting regularly to further a common corporate goal with a love of higher justice, ritual and reading and a tendency to see moral, spiritual and aesthetic concerns as part of one higher concern. These and not the government chanceries or universities were the main channels for creative thought. This left a permanent, if ambiguous, legacy of moral intensity.

In conclusion, let me say that, while the Romanovs succeeded in snuffing out the candles of the light of Masonry, they did not extinguish the spark that had lit them.

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- A number of prominent Russians, who also happened to be Freemasons, have appeared on stamps issued by the Soviet Union over the years. You will note, however, that they are so honoured for their other achievements (in literature, architecture etc), and not due to their membership of the Craft.

.....

PREFACE.

Freemasonry in Russia and Poland was once a fact.

In Russia and Poland as well as in Austria it was political opinions and political currents of thought that dug its grave. The most zealous and the most active of these grave-diggers were those who everywhere and at all times from the first day of its existence to the present day have striven to kill freemasonry, viz:- in Roman Catholic countries the Clerical, in Russia the Orthodox Party. They were not very particular about the means used in trying to suppress it, and many a Brother was obliged on account of his love for the Brethren and his neighbours to give up all his goods and chattels and suffer imprisonment or exile for many years. It is true that their treatment at the hands of the Inquisition in Italy, Spain and Portugal, was still worse and more cruel. But little by little a healthier state became the lot of those afflicted countries, and today Freemasonry is again in a flourishing condition there. In Russia, however, it still sleeps the sleep of death--as is also the case in Austria.

In Russia, indeed, there has never been any question of its prospering, or of its really attaining its full powers, as has been the case in other states in spite of all the clerical attacks and acts of hostility. Russian Freemasonry was always a very weak plant, which, apart from its not having had sufficient time allowed it to flourish properly, possessed in itself but a little stamina and power of resistance to defy the heavy storm when it came. Is it a wonder then that it was uprooted by the first storm which swept over it?

It will, therefore, not always be a pleasant picture which will pass before our eyes. Notwithstanding our sympathy which is assured by all the disasters that burst over Russian Freemasonry from without, a want of moral force, the need of a strong and inviolable bond between the individual, in a word, a lack of true and genuine love of the Brethren stands out so prominently that unfortunately a good portion of our sympathy is again lost.

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Nevertheless, the picture we get of Russian Freemasonry reveals many a bright and beautiful spot, and the cloud is again and again pierced by many a ray of sunshine. Most of these rays of sunshine, however, are due to German Freemasonry-which of course is a special source of pleasure to us Germans.

Russian Freemasonry is at the same time a picture of German civilization.

It was German Brethren who in Russia sowed the first seeds of fraternal affection and of love to one's neighbours, and who tried to introduce enlightenment and instruction into the country which at that time was so intellectually poor and so destitute of culture. So long as Freemasonry existed in Russia, it was German Brethren that led the van in Russian Masonic life, and many Lodges worked in the German language.

It is not without reason that in what has just been said we have spoken almost exclusively of Russian Freemasonry. "Why not also Polish Freemasonry!" one involuntarily asks from the point of view of the present day. To this question the simple answer might be given that the two had nothing to do with each other. It is not only that scruples of a historical and political nature might be adduced, the country of Poland in the form in which we know it today not having definitely become a part of the Russian Empire until the year 1815, that is, a few years before Freemasonry in Russia closed its Temples for ever, but there are also scruples which have their origin in Freemasonry itself-the connection between the Lodges of both countries appears, namely, to have been a very loose one. But, on the other hand, it might be considered that, even though Poland did not pass over into the full possession of the Russians until 1815, it had long been a mere dependency of the Russian Empire-it is only necessary to think of the mock king Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski-and further that the Freemasonry of both countries, even though the single Lodges kept up hardly any intercourse with one another, had much that was common to both; in particular there stands out in each of them, especially at the time of their creation, an

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inclination to follow and depend on German Freemasonry. A link in the chain would, therefore, be missing, if no notice were to be taken here of the Freemasonry of Poland.

The present work is intended first of all for the Masonic Brethren, especially for the German Brethren, who, if they penetrate a little deeper into the history of their own Masonry, must needs after the above explanations take up the study of Russian Masonry, and learn much that will be to the advantage of their own Lodge, often enough too, what must not be done. But the work is also further addressed to all those who stand outside Freemasonry. The subject will be new to most readers, for is it not true that in German Masonic reference books, which are to be found in every larger national library, there exists about Russia and Poland but very short notices, and these contain much that is incorrect, while in Russia and Poland themselves one is not much better of in this respect. With the exception of a few short articles in several reviews, only Pypine, who has also made himself a name in the field of Slavonic literature, has treated Russian Freemasonry in greater detail, but only in so far that he that he collected a great amount of material for fixing dates. In this collection he promises, it is true, a connected history of the development of Freemasonry, but unfortunately he was carried off by death within a year of giving his promise.

This book only offers the principal features of the history Freemasonry in Russia and Poland, thus corresponding to the "Library for Freemasons" which is being published at the same time by the same firm. For anyone who wishes to make a more thorough study of the subject I can recommend my more detailed works. viz:--"The History of Former Masonry in Russia-according to Materials supplied by the "Landes-Loge" in Berlin, and the Libraries of St. Petersburg and Moscow. By Dr. Friedrichs. Berlin 1904. (Ernest Siegfried Mittler and Son)." "Freemasonry in the Prussian Town of Warsaw-a Contribution to the History of the Grand "Landes-Loge" of the Freemasons of Germany. Zirkel-Korrespondenz. By Dr. Friedrichs. No.12.1905. (E.S.Mittler and Son)."

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To all intents and purposes, however, these lines are quite sufficient. Possibly through them one or another outsider will not only feel an interesting the Freemasonry of these two countries, but will also extend this interest to the object and aim of Freemasonry in general. In this way the book will fulfil a double purpose. Should anyone imagine that he is about to get an insight into the “secrets” of Freemasonry, he will certainly be disappointed. Do what I will there is nothing “to betray”.

Of real “secrets” I know nothing myself. We Freemasons have no secrets; nor can we have any, for all our more important publications -in fact, the whole of our “science” is contained in every national library and can be consulted by everyone. I shall again refer at the proper place to this point on which even among the best educated persons the strangest ideas prevail.

Freemasonry in Russia.

1. The Earliest Beginnings of Freemasonry. Forerunners and Varieties of Freemasonry.

Older Masonic Manuals make the statement, which is as false as it is categorical, that Peter the Great was the first Freemason in Russia, and that through him the first Lodge in the Empire was founded. They also supply further details with embellishments, where and when and on what occasions he was won over for Freemasonry. According to them he brought it with him from England, that country to which the most ancient traces of Freemasonry point, and where just at the time when Peter was studying there, through a new organisation and through a transformation of working Masonry into spiritual Masonry fresh life was being infused into the Lodges.

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Who was it that won over Peter for the new covenant? It was of course the man, who is considered by the English as the best qualified representative of both working and spiritual Masonry, viz, Sir Christopher Wren, the builder of the great palace at Winchester, of the beautiful Pembroke College, Cambridge, and of that unsurpassed masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Peter's solemn initiation was therefore, consummated by this Sir Christopher Wren, but who entered with him at the same time into the new brotherhood? They must and could only have been two persons, his most intimate friends and at the same time his most eminent counsellors-Lefort and Patrick Gordon. In Masonic circles the latter was especially in favour, several Gordon's having assumed leading parts in Freemasonry." What a marvellous thing the imagination is!" we exclaim involuntarily. How well it understands the much out of nothing! It makes one feel very sorry to be obliged to approach these beautiful magic images somewhat closely and to ask its ingenious conjurors: - "Whence come all this Knowledge?" No answer follows, nor can any answer follow, because not a tittle of all this is true. Nowhere, whether in Russia or elsewhere, is the slightest proof of such an assertion to be found.

The enquiry as to why such great efforts have been used to make Peter occupy this position is not difficult to answer. With the view of making a European civilised state out of his kingdom that was becoming petrified in Asiatic barbarity, Peter had recognised his first task to be the education and instruction of his people. But did not these two words "education" and "instruction" stand on the banners of Freemasonry? If it was possible to claim him for the alliance, it would have been an honour for him and at the same time for the Lodge. As so often in life, so also in this case, the wish was simply the father of the thought.

Other names of those times which are often mentioned with predilection, may likewise be disregarded, e.g. that of James Keith the well-known Scotchman in political history, and that not only in Russia where he won rich laurels by his warlike exploits, but also in this country where as a Prussian field-marshal he enjoyed the same sterling renown as a military

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commander. James Keith was a Freemason, it is true, but he belonged not to a Russian, but to an English lodge, and just as he was a member of an English Lodge, there were also of course many Freemasons living in Russia who were members of a Lodge either in England or Italy or France; but no Russian Lodge was in existence.

Among Peter's successor's we find no trace of Freemasonry either. Was it even conceivable? In Peter's case it was possible, for was not, as we have said, his principal endeavour to ingraft civilization-western civilization-on his country; of his successor's of whom, on account of their short reigns, Peter's consort Catherine Alexievna, his grandson Peter Alexeievitch and later Ivan Antonovitch, must be eliminated, and of whom, therefore, only the two women Anna Ivanovna and Elizabeth Petrovna come under consideration, this cannot be said, however willingly we might be to do so. Anna Ivanovna only loved-but not education and culture, and Elizabeth Petrovna , even when her amours now and then left her time for ruling, took no interest whatever in Freemasonry, not even in her leisure hours. But Freemasonry, needs for its development and prosperity the support of the powers that be, just as it desires itself to be in its turn a support of those powers.

In consequence of the ever increasing communication with Western Europe Freemasons naturally went to Russia in greater and greater numbers; nevertheless, they did not succeed until later-under Catherine-in making themselves independent i.e. in founding Lodges.

That in the meantime the ground was being prepared for them is shown by other circumstances. Systems, which had humanitarianism in common with Freemasonry, were well received in Russia; they desired, as also did the latter, to work for and build up the spiritual welfare of mankind, but that they did become absorbed in this one unique aim of Freemasonry, the moral thought. They pursued at the same time other purposes which were right worldly, as, for instance, when some of them wanted to find the philosopher's stone.

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Among these the most prominent on account of the great numbers of their Followers were the Strict Observance and the Rosicrucians. Who were the Strict Observance and the Rosicrucian's?

The Strict Observance has its name from the implicit Obedience the members were obliged to vow to their superiors in the order. When and in what way they made their entrance into Russia it is hardly possible to decide; perhaps from France, its native country, where the Strict

Observance sprang into being about the middle of the 18th century as the continuation of the Order of the Knights-Templars which had been destroyed 400 years previously. It formed adherents not only in Russia, but also in Germany and in Italy, who were probably attracted to it principally by the pomp and luxury which were displayed by the Order. For instance, about the year 1774, in other words, just at the same time when Freemasonry was making its first feeble attempts to gain a footing in Russia, the whole of Courland was in the hands of the Strict Observance.

As the head of the Strict Observance we must, perhaps, consider another system, which was likewise very widely spread, viz the Clericatus, so called because at its head there was an ecclesiastic, one who was actually in holy orders. Accordingly its adherents laid most stress on the spiritual element in the Order and did wonders in praying and fasting. Moreover, they also seem to have searched for the philosopher's stone.

This, however, was most thoroughly done by the Rosicrucians. Where they took their origin is not quite clear; not even their name is clear. Are we to think of that John Valentine Andreä who at the time of the Thirty Years' War founded a society "for the improvement of the Church and for the founding of the lasting welfare of states and individuals" and in his publications with an illusion to his name made use of a St. Andrew's Cross

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with four roses, or of the German nobleman Christian Rosenkreuz who is mentioned by Andreä in his writings and who was initiated in the East by wise Hindoos into the secrets of the elixir of life and of the philosopher's stone? No one knows, and probably no one ever will know. But it is clear that in Russia as well as in Germany the Rose Cross Order had many adherents.

Whatever judgement may be formed about the Strict Observance and the Rosicrucians, however justified may be the heavy charges that have been brought against them, charges which originated to a great extent among Freemasons, and among which expressions such as "obscurants" and sordid "swindle societies" are almost mild, this at all events is irrefutably certain that among the Russian adherents are men who are far above such suspicions. Their work on behalf of the general public and their self-sacrificing love for their fellow-men shines in so bright a light that no calumniating can throw a shadow upon their characters, and indeed, is only on account of these men that the systems have been mentioned at all. These men were above all the two Rosicrucians Schwarz and Novikoff.

John Eugene Schwarz is commonly regarded as the father of Russian Freemasonry. From the Masonic point of view this is not correct, for as we have said, he was a Rosicrucian and not Freemason. How then did he obtain this decorative surname? A public that judges impartially and that understands how to estimate the value of a public man will give its judgement not according to whether such a one belongs to any particular party or system to which he has been sworn in, but will consider simply and solely his actions. Right thinking people in Russia and also all those who in any way came into contact with Schwarz could not but be completely indifferent as to whether he was a Freemason or a Rosicrucian, or whether he belonged to the Strict Observance or again to one of the very numerous smaller systems, of which we will speak later.

Now who was Schwarz, and what did he accomplish? Petroff writes about him as follows in his "History of Russian Literature:"- "Russian Masonry trained many enlightened and noble men who proved themselves in the highest degree to be useful collaborators in the various branches of the

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Russian administration; it declared war against the philosophy of the Encyclopadists and of that corruption of morals which this philosophy had provoked in Russian society. At the time of the mighty spreading and the prosperous position of Masonry in Russia Schwarz was at its head. At first he taught German and later Philosophy at the University of Moscow. In doing so he imbued the young students above all with the thought that knowledge has no meaning if it leads to atheism and immorality. All his lectures were directed against the scepticism and the materialism of the Encyclopadists. In order to infuse into the young people a real love of knowledge, he founded learned societies, which helped him in his endeavour to spread scientific enlightenment. He won the great sympathy and the profound gratefulness of both the higher and the lower classes in Moscow. The foundation of schools, the publication of manuals and books of a moral and religious tendency, the opening of printing offices and bookshops, the training of teachers, the sending of them abroad with the view of completing their education, the founding of hospitals and chemists shops-these are the characteristics "of Schwarz's enlightened activity and of the blessings it produced."

Thus we read, as already stated, in Petroff's "History of Russian Literature," a manual of moderate size, in which, as in other histories of Russian literature, whole sections are devoted to Russian Freemasonry. Where, then, do we find in our histories of German literature anything about German Freemasonry? We may ask not altogether without reason. While Freemasonry in all other countries has become public property, and public opinion has had to consider it, it seems as though German freemasonry wishes ever to be the violet that flowers in secret. Is it right that it should be so? Is it not strange, and is it not at the same time a pity that, outside the narrow circle of the Brethren no one really knows that just the greatest among the "intellectuals" of Germany were Freemasons? Who knows Lessing, Wieland or Goethe as Freemasons? Who knows what they found in Freemasonry, and what they did for Freemasonry? It is but very recently that endeavours seem to have been made, which forsake this course of "secrecy" and are anxious to do something for the common good. It has always been otherwise in every other country, even in Russia, and it was held in high esteem that Freemasonry had left its mark on Russian civilization.

The course which had been commenced by Schwarz was continued by Nicolai Ivanovitch Novikoff. Although he belonged to a St. Petersburg Masonic Lodge from 1777 to 1779, yet he returned to the Rosicrucians after his removal to Moscow. What his reasons were is not evident, though they were scarcely either aversion or animosity. These contrasts between single systems were not so prominent in Russia in those days, for there were frequently enough who at one and the same time belonged to several systems.

An ardent friend of the people and an enthusiastic patriot, Novikoff staked his all for the moral betterment of the Russian people. Even the non-Masonic press looks back upon this man with pride. He was the founder of the first Russian periodical, the “Utrenni Swet,” and the “Moscow Gazette” was very successful under his editorship. As in these papers, so, too, by means of smaller publications and books he worked indefatigably and undauntedly for the enlightenment and thereby the moral betterment of the people. As a practical man he created a considerable amount of national schools. In addition to this he opened printing-offices in which he had manuals for his schools printed and at the same time also other books with a tendency to religious morals and enlightenment, which were then sold for a few kopeks, or else given away. Further, he built hospitals. As, however, only a very small fraction of the population could profit by them, he set up chemist’s shops which dispensed their medicines gratis to the needy. Charitable societies were created by him in several quarters of the City of Moscow, and he also started that great society which made it its duty to supply with bread and victuals over wide districts the people who were starving in consequence of the failing of the crops. A calamity which so frequently occurs in Russia. This is something which no private individual before or since has managed to do. The speech which Novikoff held at the opening of the latter institution must have been so exceedingly convincing and inspiring, for did not a rich Moscow merchant immediately afterwards make him a present of his fortune of several millions of roubles?

Surely nothing more need be said in recommendation of Novikoff. Should then-to recur to the thought already touched upon above that all the

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Rosicrucians were only “obscurants” and “sordid swindle societies,”- Schwarz and Novikoff have been the only “white crows” among them? Does not after all stream from these two, whose whole surroundings it is impossible to think were solely a bad set, on to the rest-of course I am here only speaking of Russian Rosicrucians-a little brightness which causes them to shine in a less unfavourable light?

This is Novikoff in so far as he appeared before the public. If, now, in the case of a man who knew how to do such much good in such a perfect manner, it is a matter of course that his mind was like a precious stone, yet it is interesting to see from fragments of his own writings, how he believed it was still necessary to work out his own education. In the Rumjanzoff Museum at Moscow there are several reports by Novikoff, so called “Confessions,” which the Rosicrucians had to send into their superiors in the order (according to Pypin):--“Sincerely and with a pure heart I confess that I have not grasped the meaning of the beautiful columns on which the holy Order rests, viz. the love of God and of one’s neighbour, or rather I have understood it wrongly by thinking that man of himself was capable of loving God and his neighbour. Indeed, I was blinded to such an extent, that I imagined I fulfilled the commandment of their meaning; but now I thank my redeemer with tears, that He has permitted me to become conscious of my blindness and to recognise it. He has made me comprehend and feel that love, even the blissful sensation of poor sinners, is the gift of God, which He gives to his saints to taste of, and to enjoy. There are moments in which they feel love for their neighbours, and cherish the strong and most blissful confidence that they also love God. But these moments are transitory. Daily when I rise and when I lay me down to sleep, unworthy though I am, I pray to the Father of the Universe in the name of His Son, Our Redeemer, that He will awaken me this sweetest of sensations, and I will thank my merciful Redeemer for having not unfrequently granted me in His mercy to cherish the ardent desire to love God and my neighbour; and this holy and divine truth He sealed by the sacrifice of His soul for those that He loved-for all sinners. And yet what a stranger I still am to his love! Often, only too often, I have no desire, for the sake of one of my friends, to rise early or go to bed late, or in bad weather to go and errand. My pride and my blind self-will often will not allow such sweet sensations to rise within me. I am convinced that the pure, unblemished prayers of our wise and sympathizing forefathers, and of our highly esteemed superiors are efficacious to us, and that they

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direct the grace and blessing of the Almighty down upon our native country..... As regards the unfolding of love in my heart, and the uprooting of all that is uncouth in it, and as regards the meeting of everyone half way in a friendly manner, I avow openly and sincerely that to this end I use all the strength that becomes mine through the mercy of his Redeemer; nevertheless, I feel that even now I often make mistakes in my judgement of rudeness and friendliness; but thanks to my merciful Redeemer, I also at once feel those mistakes, am sorry for them, suffer in my heart on account of them, and beg and implore His Grace that it may confirm me in my sincere and true desire to be friendly towards every one and to fall out with no one, and in my endeavours to let everyone to depart from me contented.”

We must not leave Novikoff just yet. It is credible that this man whose whole life had been nothing but the purest love of his fellows and sacrifice for the welfare of humanity, very soon found himself within the walls of Schlüsselburg, where he languished for nearly five long anxious years, and where poison and daggers were to be seen alongside powder and the hangman’s rope.

Petroff, the literary historian, who has already been referred to, writes on this subject as follows:- “The secret character of the Masonic society to which Novikoff belonged, its secret rites, its enormous wealth in material possessions, and its wide spread charities aroused the discontentedness of outsiders and his companions. With them even many well educated persons became discontented, because the Masons, in their endeavours to penetrate all the secrets of nature, would not study Nature per se by means of scientific experiments; they declined to accept the results obtained by the natural sciences, and believed in various so-called secret sciences, e. g.

Alchemy, magic, and the Cabbala. Although the philanthropic activity of the Masons should have attracted the sympathy of the Church, the latter was dissatisfied with them on account of their arbitrary interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, and on account of their mingling pure Christian teaching with ancient heathenism and Modern Judaism. Novikoff had also taken the field in earnest against the Jesuits who just at that time enjoyed to the full the protection and sympathy of the empress” To this may be added a few supplementary remarks which are given by Fisher, the publisher of the Eleusinian, in his work entitled, “Masonry in the Orient of Russia during the

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Reign of Catherine II.” “When this establishment (one of Novikoff’s printing-offices as above mentioned) he says, was as yet scarcely half-finished, it was unexpectedly destroyed along with its founders. It is well known that from the earliest times a strong antipathy has prevailed between the rich Moscovite nobles who are fond of living in independence, and the court nobles of St. Petersburg; the sovereigns have also found it to be more politic to attract the Moscovite magnates to their persons, and weaken and leave desolate the ancient capital of the empire. This alliance of well-to-do men could not fail to create a sensation at court. In particular its members were suspected of being Freemasons, and before long a considerable number of heavy charges were brought against them. It was declared that they promoted an enlightenment which was contrary to all the principles of monarchical states; that they endeavoured to secure the favour of the people by the distribution of victuals and medicines, and that they had an arsenal hidden away in their cellars for the equipment of an army. And now the die was cast. The prefect of police received orders to set a watch all round the institute, to seal everything, and to search for arms. He found neither cannon, nor a large provision of gunpowder, but a considerable number of rifles and pistols, not hidden away, but quite conspicuous in the houses of several rich officials who were at the same time enthusiastic sportsmen.” The consequence was that Novikoff was arrested at the beginning of 1792 and only released from the Schlüssenburg after the death of Catherine by a rescript of Paul I on the 6th of November 1796---a dark page in the political history of Russia, a glorious page for the Freemasons of Russia!

Besides the Rosicrucians and the Strict Observance there was in Russia quite a number of other systems, which, however, never disposed of a large membership; consequently they need not delay us long. To these belonged the so-called “Illumanati” who were imported from South Germany, and who with their “enlightenment” are said at the beginning to have inspired even Goethe and Herder with enthusiasm, but before long were prohibited in all countries as being a danger to the state. Further, we may mention the so-called Melissino System- so named after the Russian Lieutenant General Melissinno; - it was exceedingly rich in prayers and vows. The Avignon Society of New Israel also claims our notice; the members were at the same time alchemists, conjurors of spirits, and Chiliasts.

All these systems found adherents in the larger towns; we know there were Lodges at St Petersburg, Moscow, Riga-her Herder was a member of the Lodge "To the Sword" which belonged to the Strict Observance-and Archangel.

II. Freemasonry under Catherine II

Elizabeth Petrovna was succeeded, after the short-lived reign of Peter III, by the latter's consort, Catherine, whose influence was soon to make itself felt. If we read the pamphlets and books about Catherine which have come to us just lately from England and Switzerland, we are inclined to think that the whole of her life's work was nothing but a moral failure, and that she was completely absorbed in the profession of a Phryne. After all, it is very strange that just those persons whom people are beginning to feel as a scourge even in London, and in Zurich and Geneva, because they not only preach free love in theory, but also carry out their theory in practice, -- it is strange, we say, that just these persons that reproach Catherine with their own principal maxims! Were it not an empress, but a lady of the student proletariat, they would admit that she had the right "to sew her wild oats." Moreover, it must not be forgotten that at that time morals were not at a specially high premium in any country, nor in any society whether high or low.

Whatever may be thought of Catherine's ideas about morals, or of the cultivation of her affections, - we may, indeed, condemn both severely - there can be no doubt as to her statesmanship and the cultivation of her mind. At that period education found its home in France, being personified by such men as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, d'Alembert, and Grimm. It was no wonder that Catherine was a most enthusiastic reader of their works! But her sharp intellect at once recognized the impossibility of putting into practice for her people the ideas which she drew from these

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works. Materialism, atheism, and the democratic revolutionary tendencies which the philosophy of those men proclaims, could only be fatal, if applied to a people that was so little matured as the Russians were. In its education she needed more reliable supports, and these offered themselves just at the time when she was looking out for them: they were the Freemasons.

The Freemasons, who had just begun to settle in Russia, set themselves in their Lodges dead against the philosophy of the French which preached godlessness and immorality, and for which they substituted pure faith in God without any narrowing dogmas. Further, although their chief aim was to throw a bond of brotherly love round the whole earth, they required above all from their followers the most sincere and most faithful recognition of the supremacy of the state. Did not such support come to Catherine most opportunely? And did not these very men individually pursue the objects she had set herself to attain? The fostering of the arts and sciences, the improvement of health, and the education of the people-this was Catherine's programme and these were the ideals of the Freemasons. Must not the latter, therefore, have been extremely sympathetic to her? She thus gladly reached out to them the hand which they sought.-If later times brought about many-very many-changes, there it is that we must seek on whose side the fault was.

The public in general, here in Germany, as everyone knows, is very much inclined to underestimate the work and the achievements of the freemasons. The reason for this is to be sought for in their self-chosen exclusiveness, and their extreme sensitivity to any contact with the outer world. This thought might make it seem as though in the above explanations we had exaggerated the value of Russian freemasonry, being looked at only from the Masonic point of view. Let us, therefore, quote the criticism of an objective judge, that of Petroff, the literary historian who has already been frequently referred to. His opinion is objective, because he was so far removed from Freemasonry, that he did not even know it by hearsay; it is, therefore, only possible that he obtained his results by scientific experiments. In his history of Russian literature he says: -- "The catch-words by which we may characterize the tendency which was followed by the sciences in general and literature in particular (under Catherine II) are: -- the philosophy of the

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French, the raising of the national conscience, the introduction of new literary currents of thought, and the spread of Freemasonry, which, to a certain degree, was to serve as a counterbalance for French philosophy.

1. The Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin and the Grand Lodge in London.

When did the earliest Masonic Lodge first see the light in Russia? The merit of having introduced Freemasonry into Russia belongs, as has already been mentioned, to a German. Together with a few Germans who had been taken to St. Petersburg by their office or their business, Bro. Von Reichell who had been appointed head of the scientific section National Military School for the sons of nobles, and who before his appointment had belonged in Berlin to the Lodge “To the Three Golden Keys” which worked according to the system of the Grand “Landes-Loge” founded according to the same system the Lodge “Apollo” on the 27th of March 1771. It was comprised of only 14 members, 10 of whom were Germans. Of the remainder 3 were from Alsace-Lorraine, and only one was a Russian: the “général de Narischkin, écuyer de Sa Majesté l’impératrice de Russie,” as he registered his name in the lists. No lucky star hovered over Reichell’s first creation; it had itself committed a serious error by wishing in spite of the very small number of its members to build its own Lodge, in consequence of which financial difficulties at once arose. Further, its existence was also rendered bitter from another quarter.

In June of the same year a Lodge was also founded at St. Petersburg under the patronage of England. This Lodge-“To Perfect Concord”-as well as the Mother-Lodge to which it was subjected-the Grand Lodge in London-not only did not recognise the one which had been founded by the Germans, but declared it to be illegal, and thus cut off all possibility of life.

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This is not intelligible to an outsider without further explanation. He will ask if it is a fraternity for one Lodge-in this case an English one-to enter the lists against another-a German one - and even to aim at its very existence. To such a question, which is a reasonable one, we can only reply that among brothers of one family many things occur which are not very pleasing. The struggle which now took place is also remarkable from another point of view, whereby we receive an illustration of what has often happened in the political history of England and Germany: The Englishman with arms akimbo, without regard for those about him making straight for his goal and of course attaining it; the German constantly hesitating and politely looking about him lest he should give the slightest offence, and, for all that, arriving too late.

The London Grand Lodge had in the meantime sent the Berlin "Landes-Loge" which had handed over the documents of its constitution and its rituals to the Lodge "Apollo," and thereby entered into the relationship of a Mother-Lodge exercising its protection, the categorical declaration "that the London Grand lodge had the exclusive right of constituting other Lodges in the whole world." And before doing so it had already appointed Elagin-a Privy Councillor, Senator, and Member of the Imperial Cabinet-to be the "Grand Master of and for all the Russians." This, of course, made a disagreeable impression in Berlin, and as a matter of fact the situation was such that it was a question of bending or breaking. As they could not make up their minds to the latter, they had recourse to putting off the consequences, by shifting their position, and offering polite objections, whereby, of course, they lost everything. The apprehensions which were entertained in Berlin were, it is true, not altogether without foundation. If opposition was offered to England on account to a gain in Russia which was still uncertain, it might through the foundation of English Lodges on German territory endanger the acquisitions of Masonry which was still in its infancy there. That was and still is a weakness on the part of us Germans, that we like to look on, and admire what is foreign, and to adopt from it what perhaps we ourselves have in a better form. Accordingly it might have been easily possible, in such a struggle, for the English to have obtained a footing in Germany and for English Lodges to have flourished at the expense of the German ones. But, on the other hand, a compensating justice has always taken care that when we have been on our knees for some time before the foreigner, German thought and German national feeling have awoke again

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with elementary power, and driven everything foreign before them. The leaders of the Berlin Lodge did not realise this; they looked upon it, indeed, as a gain when the Grand Lodge in London declared that it did not intend to found any Lodges within the German Empire, if the full right was allowed it to do so in Russia. The meaning of this was that with us nothing was won, and in Russia everything was lost.

This then was the result which had been arrived at by the diplomatists of the Berlin and London Lodges; in all their deliberations one thing they had forgotten-something which, however, lay on the surface, namely, to make an exact examination of what those most concerned -the Russians-intended to do in the matter. In the meantime the strangest of circumstances came to light.

The Lodge “Apollo” had, indeed, for the above mentioned reasons very soon suspended its work. On the other hand, however, Reichell opened a new Lodge in St. Petersburg as early as May 1773. This was the Lodge “Harpocrates” of which Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi became the head.

Encouraged by this success Reichell rested not from his labours, which were also crowned with success. What a genius of work this man was, and what a power for work he possessed, may be seen by any one who knows the difficulties incurred in such creations, in the fact that in the same year 1773 beside the Lodge “Harpocrates” above mentioned he created at St. Petersburg the Lodges “Horus”, “Latona”, and “Nemesis”. Further, the Lodge “Apollo” which had been closed a year before, was solemnly re-opened, but under entirely different financial conditions. In addition to this a Lodge “Apollo” was founded at Riga, and the Lodge “Isis” at Revel.

During this time the English did not remain inactive. In the year 1774 they opened at St. Petersburg the Lodge “To the Nine Muses;” further the Lodge “Urania” and the Lodge “Bellona;” at Moscow the Lodge “Clio” of which “Catherine is said to have been the patroness; and at Jassy in Moldavia the Field Lodge “Mars,” i.e. a Lodge the members of which were exclusively

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soldiers serving in the field; this last worked there during the Turco-Russian War.

Then there were the forces of the opposing parties. Reichell's Lodges in no way acknowledged by the English, and not only abandoned by Berlin, but already surrendered to the English; and the English Lodges staying on their bond. Then it was that Reichell showed not only an immense capacity for work, but also a firm will and above all a heart for his own and the German cause. Was all for which he had staked the best of his years to be blotted out by that one stroke of the pen from London? Was the stately number of Brethren who after mature reflection and with faithful conviction had joined the system of the Grand "Landes-Loge" at Berlin, i.e. the Swedish System, to discard it all at once with a light heart, and to pass over with flying colours to the opposing-the English-System? Supported by his friend, the above named Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi, with whom he had founded the so-called Princes' Lodge "Osiris" -a Princes' Lodge, because the majority of the members were princes-he entered into correspondence with Elagin, and these negotiations which only lasted a short time, must have been carried on in an exceedingly clever and convincing manner by Reichell, for it is incredible what he accomplished. On the 1st of September 1776 Elagin abandoned the English System and accepted the Swedish System of Berlin, and that with the whole of his Lodges.

In this affair Reichell had found a strong support in Count Panin, one of Catherine's ministers who stood high in her favour, and who as ambassador in Sweden had become very much attached to the Swedish System. Further, we also know from political history that Panin was always one of the principal supporters of Prussia in the Russian Cabinet. Was not this assistance given from the first? And did not perhaps Catherine herself intervene with that end in view? Catherine did not like the English; her self-glorifying nature felt itself injured by British supremacy on the Sea. On the other hand her views often coincided with those of the Prussian king, and she frequently followed his advice. But of the latter she knew that in him Masonry had not only a friend, but also an active member, for not long before, on the 16th July 1774, he had even accepted the patronage of the Grand "Landes-Loge" in Berlin. Is it not very probable that, in the

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deliberations and negotiations on this subject, about which she was kept well informed even to the smallest details, she placed all her influence on the side of Prussia? And Elagin! Well, he was a courtier, and as such was at the beck and call of his Sovereign; he was not a man of one single purpose, but, as will soon be seen more clearly, one of the many whose motto is “I am not particular.”

2 The Swedo-Berlin System in Russia.

The union of the whole of the Lodges under one head produced at first really fine and healthy fruit. The list of Lodges in 1777 contains the names of 18 Lodges working under the constitution of the Provincial Lodge of St Petersburg according to the Swedo-Berlin System, among which were 10 at St Petersburg alone, 3 at Moscow, 1 at Revel, 1 at Archangel, 1 at Polots in the Government of Witebsk, 1 field Lodge at Kagodury in Moldavia (perhaps the one at Jassy above referred to, of which nothing more is known). Members, as well as the highest officials, among whom, besides Elagin, the above mentioned minister, Count Panin, and Prince Gabriel Gagarin, together with Major General Melissino, Knight, who, as soon as Masonic Lodges had been established, had given up his own system which was an imitation of the Strict Observance, all worked with ardour and devotedness at the task which now fell to their lot, and the single Lodges as well as the Grand Provincial Lodge showed signs of power and prosperity. Above all they considered it to be their duty to appear before the world as the backbone of the nation, and, therefore, kept everyone most carefully at a distance, whose course of life and position did not bear looking at with a magnifying glass.

Nevertheless, their glory lasted a decade, for the Provincial Lodge which had been founded according to the Swedo-Berlin System on the 1st of September 1776 had already disappeared again in the year 1785, never to be seen again. How did this happen?

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However much Reichell's action speaks for his warm German heart, no light was thrown onto the matter itself. The English supremacy had been cast aside, but how did they expect to continue their course? What happened, for instance, when it was desired to constitute a new Lodge? Berlin had surrendered its right once for all. These were in the hands of England. As this became evident soon enough, they consoled themselves with the thought that even if the constitution had to be sent for from that country, yet the work could be done according to the Swedo-Berlin System. Such a state of things was simply absurd, and this alone had been sufficient to destroy the whole edifice like a pack of cards. But other causes were also added.

It is nothing new that just those children, whom we love best, turn out least successfully. This was the case with the three Lodges, the Lodge "Apollo" at St Petersburg, the Lodge "Apollo" at Riga, and the Lodge "Osiris" at Moscow.

The Lodge "Apollo" at St Petersburg, as will be remembered, was the first Lodge to see the light in Russia. With great sacrifices of time and money Reichell had succeeded in calling it into existence. In consideration of the task which from the first fell to its lot through this favoured position, it ought to have risked everything in order to become, under his leadership, a real pioneer of civilization and of brotherly philanthropy. But, as we have seen, it had failed after little more than a twelve month. Once again put onto its feet by him, it offered on Sept. 1st 1776 which may be called Reichell's fête day, for on that day he had at last seen all his devotion and self-sacrifice rewarded by the union of all the Lodges under the Swedo-Berlin System-the grievous and disgraceful spectacle of being conspicuous by its absence at the meeting, thereby proclaiming that it excluded itself entirely from union. But it was not enough that it wilfully stood aside as it were in a sulk; very soon it became a traitor of the cause which it should have represented and upheld.

Whose fault was it? Simply and solely that of the Master of the Chair. And who was that? Von Rosenberg, the “aventurier” as some of the documents of the time called him. Von Rosenberg had fought with distinction against the French under the command of Count Luckner during the Seven Years’ War; but later he had gone over to the enemy. While on service he had been ordered to Paris and Metz, where he had been promoted to the Higher Grades of French Freemasonry. His instability led him back to Germany, where he founded a Lodge at Hamburg. He then travelled on as far as St Petersburg, where by reason of his Masonic activity at Hamburg and the Higher Grades he had acquired in France, he soon played an important part in the Lodge “Apollo.” Many gifts seem to have qualified him for this leading part. A contemporary wrote of him as follows: -- “...he had a great knowledge of all externals in Freemasonry, and, generally, was a man of various abilities. He spoke German, Italian, and French and understood Greek, Latin, and English; he drew well and had a considerable talent for music. In his intercourse he was very cunning. There is no doubt that he could be very prepossessing when he liked, and he was also endowed with a certain urbanity which suited him very well.” This is about right. In any case, it is a fact that the members of the Lodge “Apollo” at St Petersburg swore by their Master, and completely abandoned Reichell, the founder of their Lodge, and not only their founder, but the whole system.

Rosenberg was acquainted with Prince Kurakin, the Russian ambassador at Stockholm, the latter had become a Freemason there, and took such an interest in the Order to which he belonged, viz. the Swedish System, that he was anxious to introduce it in his native country. Rosenberg was willing, and when they both succeeded in persuading King Gustavus III of Sweden during his visit at St Petersburg to appear as a guest in the Lodge “Apollo”, and, when, into the bargain, the King’s brother, the Duke of Södermanland-later King Charles III-declared himself willing to accept the patronage of the Lodge, Rosenberg had won over all the members for his plan, and the Lodge “Apollo”-and with it several other like-minded ones-abandoned the Swedo-Berlin System, and passed over to the purely Swedish System on the 25th of May 1779. The latter Lodges were those which had come into existence a year before, viz: the Lodge “To Benevolence”, the Lodge “Phoenix”, and the Lodge “To St. Alexander,” all three at St Petersburg, the Lodge “Neptune” at Cronstadt and the Lodge “ To the Three Battle Hammers” at Revel.

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The Lodge “Apollo” at Riga had not joined the union, though for quite different reasons. We should like to call its motives pure ones, but from the point of view of tactics they were wrong, because they led to isolation and therewith to exhaustion.

The Lodge “Apollo” at Riga had always displayed the most faithful devotion for the Mother-Lodge, the Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin. At first this was not made easy for it, seeing its foundation took place during the time of the tension between Berlin and London, and the Mother- Lodge with its weak attitude was truly anything but an attractive model. But the thought that for their native country German civilization was more profitable and more necessary than English, strengthened its members in its determination, and helped them to hold out in spite of all the unfavourable circumstances. Belonging originally to a German country, they believed that their principle duty was to render German civilization to what had previously been German territory, and they thought that this could be done all the more assiduously by limiting themselves to a smaller circle. Their aspiration was thus to make propaganda in Lifland, Courland, and Esthonia, and in case of success to constitute a special provincial Grand Lodge. As a matter of fact success was not wanting. The Lodge “Apollo” was soon so strong that it was able to proceed to the foundation of a second Lodge at Riga, the Lodge “Castor”, and at the same time it opened the Lodge “Pollux” at Dorpat. It was now possible to set to work to carry out their favourite idea, when all at once it was clear that they were on the wrong track. They did not wish to have the constitution of their Provincial Grand Lodge from England, and they could not get it from Berlin. What was then the result? The three Lodges stood alone. Yet, how necessary union was, became evident soon enough.

The physiognomy of the Lodge “Apollo” had considerably changed in the course of a few years in consequence of its rapid increase. A number of members had joined it, who were in no way satisfied with the administration of Bøetefeur, the founder and leader, and they were probably right, for it appears as if in consequence of old age and ill health Bøetefeur had become very self-willed and disputatious, and wanted to make the Lodge a ‘Refuge.’

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The discontented members gathered round the person of Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, the second Master of the Chair, soon forming the majority, and the above censured mistake was now revenged. How easy it would have been to find a way of getting out of the difficulty by mediation and by conciliation, had they been in touch with the rest of the Lodges! Instead of being able to apply to a Lodge in the neighbourhood, which was under the same patronage, and in which alone the circumstances of the case would have been understood and suitable help afforded, they had to apply to Berlin, and in doing so the first thing they did was to commit an error. The answer was not, as it should have been, that at such a great distance it was impossible to comprehend the details of the case, but, with a reference to the very great merits of Bœtefeur in founding the Lodge the decisive reply was sent that he was in the right. Such a precipitate judgement naturally raised the ire of the rejected majority.

This mistake in Berlin was succeeded by another. At Riga, beside the two Lodges “Apollo” and “Castor”, were two others of more ancient date, which originally belonged to the Strict Observance, but which after separating themselves from the latter became independent. Among these four Lodges an exceedingly lively and friendly intercourse had been developed in the course of time. That, moreover, the Lodges of the Strict Observance were not on the wrong track is evident from the fact that one of them, the Lodge “To the Sword”, supported a free school at its sole expense for poor orphan children. Formally they were perfectly right in Berlin when they forbade the affiliated Lodges all intercourse with the above mentioned Lodges, which from a Masonic point of view were not at all considered legitimate. But when the Brethren at Riga write again and again to say how much they value the intercourse with these highly esteemed and dearly beloved Brethren, when they beg them not to destroy this friendship which is offered, if for no other reason, yet on account of outward communal circumstances, a way out of the difficulty ought to have been found in the interest of all. Berlin ought not to have been satisfied with the mere reference to a paragraph of the law. Riga was, of course, guilty as well; here again had to pay for their short-sightedness which has been proved above. Had they not taken up such an isolated position, the other Lodges would have intervened as mediators.

“Whom the gods wish to punish, they smite with blindness”, one is really inclined to exclaim at the third decision which came from Berlin. Quite a number of members, who had previously belonged to the Strict Observance, had joined the Riga Lodges “Apollo” and “Castor”. The Strict Observance worked in the so-called Higher Grades. i.e. Grades which are above the usual division into Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master Grades. That such an edifice, under certain circumstances, up to the 33 Grade, as was the case with the Rosicrucians, became a vain toy, is clear. The members who passed over from the Strict Observance--and with them many others-- would certainly have been satisfied with the three Grades, had not the Grand “Landes-Loge” also had a few more Grades. The Riga Lodges, however, were obstinately excluded. But he who knows how much stress the Russians lay on externals, understands that this request of the Riga Brethren for the granting of Higher Grades recurs again and again, and, he who hears that the reason given for the refusal was that the Grand “Landes-Loge” could not think of it until the Lodge “Apollo” had concluded peace with Bœtefeur, its Master, is not surprised that “on the 12th of December 1785 the Lodges “Apollo”, “Castor”, and “Pollux” renounced the protection hitherto enjoyed of the Venerable “Landes-Loge” of Germany at Berlin, and submitted themselves to the Venerable Provincial Lodge of the Russian Empire, of the English System, of which the Venerable Bro. Elagin was the Provincial Grand Master.”

He had seen the ship sinking--why should there not for once be a captain who thought first of all of his own precious life? He had returned to the English System long before. The only thing that could have stiffened the back of this pliant man would have been simply and solely the strong hand of his sovereign, but she no longer took any interest in Freemasonry. Where then was he to find any power? We can answer for it with our conscience when we herewith take leave of the man Elagin; his name must be mentioned again, and Catherine’s change must, of course, likewise be discussed.

Another Lodge, the Lodge “Osiris” at Moscow, had, as mentioned above, assumed a special attitude to the union. Many have been inclined to the view that this “Princes’ Lodge”, as it was usually styled for short, would not

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“have anything in common” with other ordinary mortals out of self-sufficiency and pride, an opinion, the justification of which cannot be denied altogether, for are not the same characteristics to be found even nowadays, and that not only in Russia? Nevertheless, we should like to say a word in favour of the contrary view, namely, that this Lodge showed an altogether correct feeling and good sense. It said: “Russia for the Russians!” Why should it let itself be controlled from outside? The name of its head, Prince Nicolai Trubezkoi, who had always proved himself to be a devoted friend of Reichell, and also of von Zinnendorf, the Berlin Grand Master, is a sufficient guarantee that the ignoble motives just named were not the leading ones.

3. The Russian Lodges until the First Suspension of Work in the Year 1794.

The way Freemasonry will now take in Russia has been already outlined in the above explanations. Instead of one system, three come into the foreground: - The Swedish Provincial Lodge under Prince Gagarin, The English Provincial Lodge under Elagin, and the independent Russian National Lodge under Prince Trubezkoi. The first two had their seats at St. Petersburg, the last at Moscow. Numerically all 3 systems enjoyed an extraordinary success; unfortunately it must be added that Freemasonry in Russia had become fashionable. Advantage was also taken of these crowds of new Masons by the Rosicrucians, and by the Strict Observance who had their stronghold at Moscow. At the same time there was a great number of Lodges spread over the whole of Russia that worked entirely for themselves. How much good all these corporations accomplished for suffering and needy humanity, and how useful they might have been in promoting its education had they only worked together with unanimity! What power was lost uselessly without this union! Nevertheless, there was also many a point within the individual systems and the individual Lodges which required an early solution.

The Swedish Provincial Lodge which had been constituted on the 25th of May 1779 by a rescript of the Duke of Södermanland, was the first to set to work with honourable intention and great energy. It at once put an end to one bad state of things which had also made itself very much felt in the rest of the Lodges during the previous few years. The German members had been joined in the course of time by many Russians who could not speak German at all, or who could speak it but a very little; the work, however, had always been carried on in German. This mistake was now removed. The Swedish Provincial Lodge filled up the principal offices doubly; alongside the Provincial Grand Master Prince Gagarin it had 2 deputy Grand Masters, Rschewski, the President of the Medical Corps, for works in Russian, and the already frequently named Von Rosenberg for works in German. There were also for both languages 2 Grand Orators and 2 Grand Secretaries. The double appointments brought in their train certain features into the work which bore fruit. We soon see the Swedish Provincial Lodge disposing over a stately number of Lodges, 9 in St. Petersburg alone, 3 in Moscow, and one each at Cronstadt, Revel, Mitau, and Pensa (not far from Nishni Novgorod) and 1 Field Lodge at Kinburn in the Government of Taurida.

The Swedish Provincial Lodge also met the wishes of its members in other respects. We know how great the wish of certain of them had been to be promoted beyond the three lowest degrees. It was for this purpose that it created the higher degree with the name of “The Phoenix Chapter.”

As has already been said, a Lodge at Revel - the Lodge “To the Three Battle Hammers” - was subject to the Swedish Provincial Lodge, with the opening of which is connected a story, which, it is true, is of no importance for the development of Masonry, but is worth mentioning here, because it is so very characteristic of the political situation in Russia itself. The approaching opening of the Lodge had also been heard of outside Masonic circles. To the half-educated Freemasonry has always been something like the veiled image at Saïs, and attempts have often been made to raise the veil. Now Major Grenet, the custom-house officer, thought he would do this in his own way - and how? He knew who the bearer was, that was to carry the documents and rituals from St. Petersburg and, therefore, he compelled him on his arrival to enter the custom-house office, and requested him to deliver

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up everything. When, of course, he refused, the custom-house officer simply called in his employ[ment], bade them lay hands on him and relieve him of his papers. Nothing was simpler. Fortunately, the custom-house officer's superior belonged to the Lodge which was about to be founded, and he ordered him to give them back again.

Elagin's English Provincial Lodge was also thriving and increasing. Its main strength lay at St. Petersburg and in the Baltic Provinces. It had 3 Lodges at St. Petersburg, 3 Lodges at Riga, 2 at Revel and one at Dorpat and Libau respectively; further, 1 Lodge at Kieff, the Master of which was Von Ellisen, who became more prominent later on, 1 Lodge at Archangel, and 1 at Schkloff in the Government of Mohileff. It is true that it very soon had the misfortune to lose 2 of the Lodges again, viz. The Lodge "Apollo" at Riga, which was already passing through another phase by adopting the Swedish System together with its Deputy Master of the Chair, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, and the Lodge "Pollux" at Dorpat, which joined the Strict Observance. For us Germans it is perhaps also of interest that the Orator of the Lodge "Hygeia" at St. Petersburg was Augustus von Kotzebue, who already at that time enjoyed no inconsiderable fame in Russia as a teller of tales and a writer of dramas.

Thus, both systems managed to gather about them a very large number of followers. It has already been stated above that besides these regular Masonic Lodges there sprang up into being a great many others which worked for themselves independently of every recognized system. According to a report, which, by the way, is not always reliable, 145 Lodges are said to have existed in the country - a very large number for so short a space of time! In this number were also included the Lodges of the Strict Observance and of the Rosicrucians which had likewise extended their borders. But they did not appear to have done anything whatever for the real good of their fellow creatures.

A real Masonic spirit and real Masonic love seem to have prevailed and to have produced good fruit only in one Lodge, viz. In the third system,

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mentioned above of the Russian National Lodge at Moscow. It could boast of no great following:- only 2 Lodges at Moscow and one at Riga. On the other hand, however, it was all the more successful, on a small scale. It is reported of the Russian National Lodge that its chief aim was the settling of the differences which existed between the Lodges of the Freemasons and the unrecognized systems, viz. The Rosicrucians and the Strict Observance, both of which were well represented at Moscow, and that it actually succeeded in uniting them all by bonds of friendship and of brotherly love both in civic life and in mutual intercourse - verily an aim ardently to be desired!

In other respects we hear little from the Lodges that is gratifying. The Deputy Grand Master of the Swedish Provincial Lodge was, as we have read above, Von Rosenberg, the same Rosenberg, who had been the evil spirit of the Mother-Lodge of the whole of Russia - The Lodge "Apollo" at St. Petersburg; and he was so here, too. Whereas he might hitherto have been looked upon merely as an eccentric and self-sufficient fellow, and whereas his passing over from the Swedo-Berlin System to the purely Swedish might be explained according to the point of view even as meritorious, seeing that he preferred the original system to the variation, it now became suddenly clear as daylight that the Brethren had allowed themselves to be led by one who was totally unworthy of their trust - by one who was nothing but an "aventurier".

In accordance with his entreaties he had been sent to Stockholm, from whence he intended to fetch the sole genuine documents and rituals. After some time he returned home with them, and there was joy - great joy - throughout the Swedish Provincial Lodge. This joy, it is true, was somewhat checked, when he asked 14,000 roubles for his travelling expenses. Nevertheless, the money was voted to him in consideration of the recovery of such important and long desired papers. But what was discovered when they were examined more closely? That they were only a copy of what they had long possessed from Reichell, not an iota more. Von Rosenberg was of course turned out of the fane. This was no loss, but the Lodge itself had to suffer under such a mistake made by one of its highest officials, even though this was not shown by a decrease in the number of the members. For this, as

already pointed out, Freemasonry had become too much a matter of fashion: the Lodge only changed as far as quality was concerned.

Freemasonry had become fashionable - too much so and purely fashionable. The work per se, the improvement of self, the separation from the dross and passions of the body, and the doing of real good to real sufferers, were lost sight of by many, and nothing remained but amusement. This is clear from two reports which, even if the colour is laid on thick, on the whole give us a correct picture. Reinbeck, a court councillor who has already been quoted, wrote as follows:- "The Russians joined this union (i.e. the Lodges) with an eagerness, which union, as a matter of fact, stood in need of restrictions, the more so because the real object was considered of little importance, but degenerated into carousing, costly amusements, and even financial speculations. Any one who is acquainted with the spirit of the nation will allow that this turn of things was inevitable. Here was an opportunity of killing time under the tempting cloak of secrecy, and of indulging in their love of show in the decoration of the higher and the highest degrees, and many a one found the means of replenishing his coffers. Great zeal was shown in the enrolment of members, indiscriminately and without any other consideration than the receiving of the subscriptions, of the employment of which little more was ever heard. At last, especially in the capital, there was scarcely anyone, even of the lowest classes, who had not been a Freemason. Nevertheless the spread of freemasonry in this way, even in its' state of extreme imperfection, evidently exercised an advantageous influence on the middle classes of society in bringing them nearer together, in laying the foundation of the great sociability, which characterises well bred Russians greatly to their advantage, and in circulating principles which as regards morals and character were certainly not without happy results." This description is supplemented by what Bergmann, attorney-general at Riga, wrote:- "In Russia, especially at St Petersburg, affairs were in a most wretched state. It was a strange medley of men from all parts of the world - men who knew nothing of either Order or Obedience, in fact so-called Masons, who had not the slightest idea what they were to understand by Masonry; for England and France had sent their wares to market; ignorant travellers had brought them to St Petersburg; and what had escaped their memory, was supplied by their impudence. England and France endeavoured to populate the imperial capital, and at last the Freemasons became so numerous that coachmen and lackeys erected Lodges

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and made proselytes. No one in my time troubled himself about the object in view; the secrets were always represented in pictures, and were at length, in the highest Melissino degree, left to the reflection of those new members who could rack their brains in counsel with their Master. In my time at St Petersburg, the worst was that, with the strange systems and their development, morality with all social virtues was neglected.” This is neither a gratifying nor a pleasing picture. For all that Reinbeck’s last sentence must not be overlooked, who tries to be just to the inner value of Freemasonry, and to whom on the whole only the outer excrescences give any cause for blame.

These disagreeable circumstances were crowned by a special scandal, the swindle affair of Cagliostro. It is scarcely credible that this man was able to gain a following out of the most fashionable and best educated classes, and that not in Russia alone! What did he tell about himself? He said that for life he was indebted to the love of an angel for an earthly woman, and that he was the direct messenger of the prophet Elijah, called to lead the faithful to a higher perfection through a physical and a moral new-birth. He, the anointed of God, was able, he said, to perform all kinds of miracles and knew all secrets which were revealed only to the most intimate of the celestial glory. Through him the inner soul of the finite creature could unite with the omnipotence of the Infinite. And what did the police report of his native town Palermo say of him? That he had been punished for brawling, pimping and forgery.

At Mitau a Temple was erected by Count Cagliostro - or as his real, less euphonious name was: Joseph Balsamo. There he carried on “Egyptian Masonry,” and everything that took place there was obscure, fantastic and mysterious. Quite new or Russia was the fact that he admitted ladies to the work, at the head of whom stood his wife, the beautiful Lorenza. It is true that she played an even greater role in the gentlemen’s Lodges where she conjured up spirits for large sums of money, and sold tinctures of life and universal panaceas, and, when this failed to draw she was not ashamed to call into requisition the charms of her own person. And what did Joseph do? He kept up a strange intercourse with the ladies with a view to the improvement of the human race!

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This then was a serious matter - so serious that Catherine herself was aroused. We have already stated above that Catherine's enthusiasm or Masonry had died down; in a word she had become indifferent to it. How was it possible that this woman of a strong will and a quick eye, and conscious of the aim she had in view, should continue to take pleasure and interest in this society which was divided against itself, was rent by feuds, and constantly changed from one system to another? What could she do with a retinue of Masonic "Coachmen and Valets?" Such people were ignored by her. But now affairs had come to a pretty pass, and the lioness suddenly roused herself from her sleep. For a time, however, she played with her victim, and then she destroyed him.

She played with her victim, i.e. she poured out the cup of her irony and her sarcasm over Cagliostro's victims. In her three satirical comedies, "The Siberian Conjuror," "The Deceiver" and "The Infatuated One," she lashed the "Deceiver" and his "Infatuated Ones" most unmercifully. Unfortunately - whether intentionally or not - she confused "Egyptian Masonry" and Freemasonry in general, and that in spite of its very many imperfections and weak points all the good in it had not been destroyed, may be proved by again quoting the testimony of Petroff :- "Several plays were written by Catherine against Freemasonry. In these plays she represents the Freemasons as deceivers or as deceived, as people who made gold and sold the elixir of life, as alchemists, and as ghost-seers. When developing the fundamental idea of the comedy entitled The Siberian Conjuror, she wrote to Baron Grimm :- The Siberian Conjuror is that theosophist who produces all the charlatanry of Paracelsus. In the comedy The Deceiver we have that notorious Cagliostro who transforms small diamonds into large ones, who knows remedies for all diseases, who has the power in himself to conjure up spirits, and to whom but a short time before Alexander of Macedonia had appeared. Thereby, however, she only presents to the world the bad side of Freemasonry basing her narration on stories which were current in society at the time; but it's humanitarian and moral side she passes over all together.

Those were heavy blows for Masonry, and worse ones were still to come. The French Revolution broke out, which, if dangerous for Freemasonry in Germany was mortal for Russian Masonry. "The Freemasons have made the Revolution!" This cry was heard both in France and in Germany, and was heard louder and more vehemently in Russia, loudest of all of course where its source has always been sought for viz. In old Polots, the head-quarters of the Jesuits, who felt themselves so much at home in that country. Catherine was a shrewd and cautious woman, and whether there was any truth in this cry or not, she obviated the danger. She had already raised her hand, as we know, in consequence of other disagreeable incidents, and now she struck a blow which of course was a mortal one. All Lodges were closed. At the beginning of the year 1794 went forth Catherine's "wish" for a dissolution, and in the course of a few months even in the remotest corners of Russia no more Lodges were to be found.

Masonic Prospects under Paul I.

Catherine's son, Paul I, was himself a freemason. It is said that he was introduced to Freemasonry during a journey which he made through Europe, when he was still the czarewitch, in company of his wife, and of Prince Kurakin who was a most devoted son of Masonry. Was it not natural then that the association which had been outlawed and banished by his mother should look forward to being re-installed and rehabilitated? And this expectation seemed as though it were perfectly justified, for immediately after his coronation, Paul summoned to Moscow the Freemasons of that city, with Professor Matthäi, the Master of the Chair of the former Lodge "To The Three Swords" at their head, and took counsel with them "in a brotherly spirit and without ceremony" as to what should be done. At the conclusion of the negotiations "he embraced each single one as a Mason and gave him the Masonic shake of the hands". This promised very well, and that "a committee was now appointed to examine the documents, to collect the ruins of Masonry and to organise the whole," was but logical. After so much recognition and so much encouragement on the part of the sovereign followed in 1797 - the prohibition of Freemasonry which "was carried out with great strictness".

This sudden change in his manner of looking at things and in his attitude to Freemasonry would cause surprise in a man of ordinary capacity, but Paul was mentally deranged, and it was just his acting by fits and starts that was characteristic of his disease. But does such an explanation clear up everything? No, for Paul was not so ill so as not to be able to grasp what would be the consequences of his action. On the contrary, as soon as it was a question of an advantage for his own person, of something that added to his lustre, he was suddenly quite normal in the choice of his means. This change of attitude was, therefore, perhaps, preceded by well weighed considerations; nay we may add that they were considerations with a real genuine background.

It was about this time that the Knights of Malta who were hard-pressed by Napoleon Bonaparte turned to the Car Paul for protection. According to the information conveyed by Paul to Count Litter, a Knight of Malta, Freemasonry was a hindrance and even a danger to the aims of this order. He was, therefore, obliged to decide in favour of the one or the other. The Maltese Order was something definite; it was a power, whereas Freemasonry as really nothing, or at any rate something altogether indefinite which might perhaps have a future, but perhaps it might not. Could Paul find the choice hard to make? In addition there was a something which though altogether unpolitical, has often decided questions in politics, viz. Paul's principal mistress, the extremely beautiful Anna Lopuchin. It was possible for him to make her a Grand Cross Lady of the Order of the Knights of St. John, but "pretty Annie" among Freemasons was no longer conceivable after the famous "Egyptian Masonry"! Thus it was that Paul became the Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of St. John at Malta, and Freemasonry was prohibited.

Further, it is said that the Jesuits set going every imaginable and unimaginable expedient against Freemasonry. Nor does this seem to have been impossible.

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Freemasonry under Alexander I.

The Re-opening of the Lodges and the Definite Closing of them in the Year 1822.

After Paul's tragical life and death the throne was ascended by Alexander I. Although at the beginning of his reign a renewed prohibition was issued against secret societies, including the Masonic Lodges, it was directed more against the other secret societies than against the Freemasons in particular, and is to be traced back less to his own initiative, than to the temper of mind of the administrative officials who were still in office from the previous reign. Even if he was not a Freemason himself, as has been repeatedly asserted, he was certainly in no way hostile to freemasonry, if we may judge from his natural disposition and ways of looking at things. If he provided for the intellectual improvement of his people by the building of district schools and grammar schools, by reforming the theological academies and the old universities, and by founding new ones - if throughout his reign a certain liberal vein is to be met with, which rendered possible the entrance into the country of foreign books and newspapers, and which in so far gave the Church liberty of conscience, that even the "Duchobores" were tolerated, how was it that Alexander is said to have stopped Freemasonry from pursuing these same principles and aspirations? That a need of Masonry was felt far beyond Masonic Circles, is borne witness to by Reinbeck:- "The inactivity of Masonry in Russia makes itself especially felt among young men. And even when loving fathers and venerable philanthropists receive well-brought up sons into the alliance en famille, the latter still feel the need of the life-giving way of looking at things which is so indispensable to the genuine Mason; nay, more, I am very much inclined to connect with it the lack of principles which the advancement of culture by the side of is so strikingly universal among the higher and lower classes in Russia. There is no means left of influencing the cultured classes, a work, in which, in just such a state, an institution like Masonry is especially suitable to accomplish much, and the various educated classes have no centre of union left; they remain strangers to one another. That the state feels the want of Masonry, is seen by the close observer, wherever generally useful and benevolent works

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are proposed which are frustrated by the coolness, the covetousness and the lack of caution on the part of those to whom the execution of them has to be entrusted.”

Thus sprang up, even though at first without direct official permission, several Lodges, the rapid prosperity of which, both quantitatively and qualitatively, is a proof of the need of that which is offered by Freemasonry. Among these must be mentioned in the early years of the 19th century the two Lodges which worked according to the French system, and in the French language, viz.: - “Les Amis Réunis”; and “De la Palestine”; further, the three Lodges which worked according to the Swedish system, in the Russian, German and French languages, viz.: - “Alexander to the Crowned Pelican”, “Elizabeth to Virtue”, and “Peter to Truth”, all in St. Petersburg.

These Lodges, which at first all worked in secret, must, however, have fulfilled the conditions and expectations which were required of them from the highest authority, for there now followed in the year 1810 their official recognition and confirmation. Henceforward the spirit of animation was very great. Most of the old Lodges were renewed, some under other names, and quite a number of new ones were added, for instance, at Cronstadt, Poltawa, Bialostock, even at Tomsk in West Siberia and at Feodosia in the Crimea. The terrible year 1812 produced a period of inactivity, especially at Moscow. The enthusiasm for the Masonic cause was, however, so great that in a comparatively short time all traces had disappeared. The war again called Field Lodges into existence; we meet with them at Mauberge in France, and here in Germany at Frankfurt-on-the-Main in 1813, and at Grumbinnen in 1814.

Among the members were included Russia’s best men - Michael Speranski, who did so much for the Russian Constitution and the Russian jurisdiction; Benkendorf, the confidant of the Czar Alexander; the ministers Rasumovski and Balasheff; Prince Lobanoff; Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, the undaunted champion for the liberation of Greece; most of the officers of the noblest regiments of the guards - those of Semenovski and Preobrajenski; of

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Germans who were serving in the Russian army, Prince Hohenlohe, Lieutenant-General von Schöler, the extraordinary ambassador of the King of Prussia at the Russian Court; the poet Kotzebue, etc.

According to the principles herein proclaimed and according to the actual results, which becomes evident by the fact that 10 years after the official recognition of Freemasonry 31 Masonic Lodges - without counting the considerable number of Rosicrucians and of the Strict Observance - were again spread over the whole country, a very favourable horoscope might have been cast for Freemasonry. Even though all hopes were shattered this time, very different were the causes from the first time. Previously its ruin was within itself, whereas now it was carried away by political waves alone.

It is true that the picture we should like to take away with us of these years of it's activity, the last of it's existence, is tarnished by a stain, which cannot be washed out even by the most favourable judgement, viz.: the dispute between the Grand Directorial Lodge (Provincial Lodge) and the Grand Lodge "Astræa", and even if it was not a question of the fundamental ideas of Freemasonry, but rather of the outward construction, yet, for all that, as above stated, it was a stain.

And what was this dispute about? At first the Grand Directorial Lodge "Vladimir" constituted itself as the head of the single Lodges. At its head stood Boeber, State Councillor and Director of the St. Petersburg Military School, who was one of the leading spirits in the revival of Freemasonry, and was on that account frequently consulted by Alexander. To the diocese of the Grand Directorial Lodge "Vladimir" belonged the Lodge "Peter to the Truth", in which with the consent, nay, the propaganda of Dr. George von Ellisen, State Councillor and Master of the Chair, the idea arose of only acknowledging the three lowest Degrees, those of the Apprentice. The Journeyman and the Master. As the Grand Directorial Lodge worked according to the Swedish System, or in other terms with high Degrees, it was under these circumstances no longer possible for the Lodge "Peter to the Truth" to remain in the union. It would have been desirable, and with this

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clear statement of the matter it would have been very easy for the separation to have been accomplished peaceably by arbitration. Von Ellissen, however, introduced into the affair a note which was anything but unlimited courtesy, so that one is easily inclined to declare from the very outset that he and his opinions were wrong, whereas it was merely a question of the decision between two opinions, both of which being equally justifiable had an equal claim to existence.

The Lodge “Peter to the Truth” was soon followed by others, and indeed by the greater number, which were constituted under a special Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge “Astræa”. Even though the first impulse to the formation of the “Astræa” was given by the Lodge “Peter to Truth” with it’s demand that it should be willing to recognise only the three lowest Degrees as legitimate, in its further development the “Astræa”, did not keep to this narrow programme, but declared that it was in no way opposed to high Degrees, per se; on the contrary, it accepted all high Degrees, not only the nine of the Swedish System as required by the Directorial Lodge, but also, for instance, the 33 of the French System. Further, it only intended to leave every one liberty of movement, being indifferent whether he wished to work altogether without high Degrees or with them, or with a certain number of them. On this basis the “Astræa” soon won a large following, which to no small extent was composed of deserters from the Directorial Lodge, so that the latter dwindled away considerably. Who knows whether, with this multiplicity of systems, it was on the right way to real prosperity? It did not prove this, nor could it do so, for time failed it. Alexander, the friend of Freemasonry and its Lodges, suddenly ordered them to be closed again - this time for ever!

For Russia, as well as for other countries, hard times had set in. Alexander had become a changed man, for Metternich’s evil influence was already upon him.

It is true that a fermentation was going on in many countries. Secret societies and unions with the express object of overthrowing the head of the state, made their appearance. In Italy the Carbonari, in Spain and Portugal

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the revolutionary Constitutionals had the power in their hands. But who were the Carbonari and the Constitutionals? Freemasons - at all events Pius VII. Assured the whole world by his condemning edict that they were so, and the alarmed Alexander who had just discovered a similar society in his own country, viz.: the wide spread "Alliance for the Public Welfare", the chief object of which was the making away with the sovereign, - this alarmed Alexander was constantly assured of it by Metternich, by the Jesuits, and by Haugwitz, the former Prussian Minister of most ill-starred memory, who himself had been a Freemason. How could he resist so many assurances? On August 6th, 1822 he put forth the order that suppressed all secret societies to which Freemasons belonged.

In the course of the same year communications were received by Count Kotschbei, the Minister of the Interior, from all the Lodges of the Empire that the order had been carried into effect. Nor have they been opened again since, although individual Brethren naturally kept up an intercourse for some time; but how far removed such intercourse is from co-operation in the Lodge, can only be rightly estimated by a Freemason.

In the year 1826 followed another prohibition by Nicholas, which was really superfluous as the Lodges no longer existed. It was called forth by the conspiracy of the Decabrists, those December men of the year 1825, who in the accomplishment of their ideals did not shrink from the most realistic of all that is realistic - from murder. The conspiracy was discovered. At its head stood Pestel, Prince Sergius Trubezkoi, Nikita Muraveff, Sergius Muraveff Apostol, Prince Chakovskoi, Bestuscheff, who had all been Freemasons. But it must be expressly emphasised that Nicholas did not allow them to be accused and sentenced, because they were Freemasons, but because they were the leaders of the revolutionary "Alliance for the Public Welfare". That he once more dissolved the Lodges at the same time as "this Alliance" and similar societies, is explained by the fact that he considered them to be "secret societies"; in the former sense he never once raised an accusation or a complaint against them. Pestel, Sergius Muraveff Apostol, and Bestuscheff expiated their crime by death on the scaffold, a death which was exceedingly horrible on account of the accompanying circumstances. The rest of the conspirators with heavy iron chains on their feet, their heads

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shorn, and wearing prisoner's dress, were carried off on wretched carts without seats 1750 miles to Siberia where they became human wrecks, and where they died.

Freemasonry in Poland

1. Freemasonry in Poland until the suspension of work in 1794.

A very similar picture as far as Masonry is concerned is also presented by the Kingdom of Poland, the country *κατ' ἐξοχήν* of political confusion; here, as there, no unity, no constancy. But we need not be surprised at this, for, if any human institution needs peace for its development, it is Masonry. And what were the chances of peace in Poland, especially at the time when Masonry was about to take root? Have all the bonds of firmness and constancy ever been loosened in any kingdom so much as here? Has any other state been bandied about so much as Poland? Therefore it was that Freemasonry, though from time to time it did develop with great activity, was never able to prosper properly.

That which must strike everyone in the first stages of Freemasonry in Poland is a predilection for, and a leaning on German Masonry, which is not a general trait in the life of the Polish people. It is, however still more striking that, when this need for support had been satisfied in a most practical form. i.e. when, in the part of Poland which had become Prussian, German Masonry had erected its own Temples, very soon-but without any culpability on the German side-this milk of human kindness was transformed into poison. On the other hand the connection between the Polish and the Russian Lodges was very slight. Just as nowadays the former Kingdom of Poland has in no way become a really Russian country, in the sane way there was no essential connection between the Polish Lodges and

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their sister Lodges in Russia. The political aversion of the two hostile cognate races also suffocated the brotherly love of Masonry.

The earliest beginnings of Freemasonry in Poland are to be met with about the middle of the 18th century, therefore somewhat earlier than in Russia. The earliest constituted Lodge of which we know the name was the Lodge “Les Trois Frères” which was founded in Warsaw in 1744. This Lodge has a special interest for us because it was in close touch with our Lodge at Königsberg “To the Three Crowns” which today is still in a flourishing condition.

Its co-founder was Prince Stanislaus Lubomirski who did so much for the improvement of Warsaw, that the city had a medal stamped in his honour. Another founder of the Lodge was Prince Adam Czartotyski who was considered as a very likely candidate for the empty throne of Poland. He worked assiduously for the welfare of his country and became the father and counsellor of a greater than himself, for, at the celebrated military school founded by himself at Warsaw he had Kosciusko, the son of his farmer and Poland’s greatest hero, educated at his own expense.

The Lodge “Les Trois Frères” and also the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur” which came into existence a few years later, passed through many changes. They were often suppressed, but they always revived. The name of the founder of the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur” also deserves to live on in the mouth of posterity on account of the hard fate which Masonry brought upon him, and which he bore with patience for Masonry’s sake. Jean de Thoux de la Salverte, military engineer at Brünn, had to pay dearly for his extraordinary zeal in the cause of Masonry by spending many years in the citadel of Spielberg near Brünn and afterwards in the fortress of Komorn to be finally banished from the country. But all these hard blows made his pet child only the dearer to him, so that as soon as he again felt settled in Poland as colonel of a regiment, he set about the foundation of a new Lodge, viz. the one just mentioned “Au Bon Pasteur.” It is, however, characteristic of the man and of his time that he renounced Masonry and left his newly won fatherland for 5

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years in order “to study Alchemy and Cabbala,” and to introduce them into his Lodge.--As already stated, both Lodges, “Les Trois Frères” as well as “Au Bon Pasteur” suffered many vicissitudes; for a time they also worked according to the Strict Observance.

The High Degrees were introduced into Poland at the same time as “Les Trois Frères.” Beside these Lodges others developed gradually, both at Warsaw itself and in the Provinces. Among the latter the one which from our standpoint seems worthy of mention was a Lodge which, it is true, only worked for a few years, viz. the Lodge “To the Three Plumb Lines” at Dantzig, which at that time still belonged to Poland. This Lodge was inaugurated by Germany-by the Grand Lodge “To the Three Globes” in Berlin.

A Grand Lodge was constituted in 1769 and the first step it took was to declare itself independent of England. The Lodge “Les Trois Frères,” in which were evidently a great number of German Brethren, soon received from the Grand Lodge the permission to employ the German language. It also ceded the Lodge “Union” to the French-speaking Brethren

The first division of the Polish Kingdom took place in 1772. In itself it hardly made any impression on the Lodges; but the following few years showed a decided turn in Masonic life. The Grand Lodge which had been created but a short time before, and which had laid such stress on its independence of England and on its self-sufficiency, was closed, its place being taken by the Provincial Mother -Lodge for Poland, which had had itself constituted by the Grand Lodge of London. Was such a step taken so simply and smoothly as that? If a man gives up his liberty in ordinary life and returns to a position of dependency, he must have been moved to do so by reasons of the weightiest kind. Can it of been otherwise with the Grand Lodge? The only possible explanation is to be found in the occurrences which took place in Freemasonry in Russia where the struggle was raging for the supremacy between the grand Lodge in London and the Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin, a struggle which ended in the defeat of the

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English. Is it not probable that the latter, having learned a lesson in shrewdness by sad experience, won the victory by staking all the means in their power at the right moment, knowing that the Poles were so fickle in their opinions and so little conscious of the ends they had in view?

The impulse for the formation of the Provincial Mother-Lodge had come from the Lodge “Au Bon Pasteur,” which has so often been referred to, and which on this occasion itself again experienced a change. Through numerous new members who were introduced to it from a club which had been dissolved by the well known leader and statesman Ignatius Dzialinski, who played a very important part in the Four Years Parliament, and later even became Kosciusko’s representative in the highest National Council-having become very influential through these members, and having assumed the new name of “Catherine to the North Star,” the Lodge managed to prevail upon all the other Lodges, which had become fairly numerous both in the Kingdom of Poland and in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to recognise it as a Grand Lodge.

Of the other Lodges which were not Masonic, but worked according to the Rite of the Strict Observance we should like to mention the Lodge “Charles to the Three Helmets” at Warsaw, because to it belonged the weak, but good-natured and art-loving King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. Can it be true that, moved by the influence of his Brethren alone, he gave the kingdom the Constitution of the year 1791, which was so full of promise and had been so long yearned for?-Rosicrucian Lodges are also to be met with.

The great majority of the Lodges employed the Polish language, but at the same time we find a few Lodges working in French and German.

The Provincial Mother-Lodge did not continue long, because it could not manage to keep for any length of time the unity and union which it had hoped for and striven to obtain. Soon we see a French Lodge which received

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its confirmation from the Grand Orient of France, then others which were constituted by the Duke of Brunswick, and besides these the strict Observance and the Rosicrucians, and finally, even though only on a short, but all the less inspiring visit, Cagliostro with his Egyptian Rite.

This confusion was put an end to in 1782 by the great patriot and statesman Count Ignatius Potocki through the union of all the Lodges in Poland under one Mother grand lodge, a name which after an elaboration was soon changed into the Grand Orient for Poland and Lithuania. Potocki obtained its acknowledgement by all the foreign Orients. This Grand Orient, which might have accomplished a grand work under the guidance of this man who was so talented and so enthusiastic for masonry, collapsed again soon after Potocki's departure for foreign countries. However, we find here still a number of celebrated names, such as the brother of the Grand Master Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, well known as a general, as a minister of education, and as the excellent translator of Winckelmann's "On the Art of the Ancients;" further, Count Francis Xaver Woyna, the great connoisseur of music and translator of many theatrical pieces; the poet Ignatius Tainski, really better known through his daughter Clementine Tainski-Hoffman, Poland's greatest authoress; then, Prince Michael Casimir Oginski, important both as a politician and an economist. Oginski was also a candidate for the Polish throne in 1764, and as a lasting work he left behind him the so called Oginski Canal, which he began at his own cost, and which unites the Niemen and the Dnieper. But the absence of Ignatius Potocki's Masonic genius was felt everywhere, and as a report to the Grand Lodge says, Freemasonry fell into a state of anæmia. It is true that individual Masons played an eminently active part in the great political struggle of the year 1791, for nearly all the champions of the Constitution of the 5th of May 1791 belonged to the Lodges.

Then followed the second and third division of Poland. In those districts which thereby came under the rule of Russia every trace of Freemasonry disappeared in consequence of Catherine's decree of the year 1794.

It is perhaps also worth mentioning in this section that the Great Orient for Poland and Lithuania kept in close touch with German Masonry, and among other works it founded at Insterburg the Lodge “The Prussian Eagle.”

Further, we must not overlook the fact that the Great Orient sanctioned the founding of a Ladies’ Lodge. Ladies had already been introduced as guests. The first Grand Mistress is said to have been Theresa Tyskiewicz; better known are the names of several of the members, such as, Princess Lubomirska and Princess Rzewska, whose husbands also enjoyed a reputation as Freemasons.

II. Freemasonry in Prussian Poland.

In those districts which were now under Prussia Freemasonry assumed quite a different aspect. All that had stood in connection with the Polish Grand Orient disappeared, and in its place the three Prussian Grand lodges undertook the work, in South Prussia as in New East Prussia. The first to appear on the scene was the Grand “Landes-Loge” in Berlin, and as early as the year 1793 it founded the Lodge “To the Hive” at Thorn. This was followed by the Grand Lodge "Royal York to Friendship" with a Temple at Kalisz, and great activity was developed by the Grand Lodge “To the Three Globes” in towns like Kalisz, Plock, Gnesen, and Posen.

The Grand “Landes-Loge” deployed its activity not only at Thorn but also at Bromberg and at Bjalostock, and above all it chose as its field of labour the capital of the former kingdom. If our chief interest is now directed to these Lodges, the reason is that the material as our disposal is greater, and on the other hand, the conditions in the provinces were only the reflexion of those in the capital.

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The first Prussian Lodge which worked at Warsaw was the Lodge “To the Golden Candlestick” It was opened in July 1797, and, as was natural under the circumstances, consisted almost exclusively of officers and officials. Beginning with 14 members, after two years it counted 50, and in the year 1801 as many as 72, so that the foundation of a second Lodge was taken into consideration. As a matter of fact this latter came into existence in 1802 with the name of “Frederic William to the Column,” and it, too, developed numerically so fast that three years later the Lodge “To the Temple of Wisdom” was founded by it.

It is worth while throwing some light on the way which the young Prussian Lodges conceived their mission, and on what they considered to be the chief object of their existence. An advance-post, as it were, in a country with a foreign language and a foreign civilization they wished to plant and propagate there German customs, German training, and German culture. What was the best way to attain this object? It did not suffice that they gave their members opportunities of absorbing Masonic knowledge with the accompanying instruction and edification; they conceived rather a general scientific and artistic education. For this purpose a Library was founded in connection with a reading-union, in which Masonic books were also to be found, the stress, however, being laid on works treating of philosophical and æsthetic subjects in general. But this collection of books was not intended for the advantage and pleasure of members alone; it was also to be of use to their relations and friends, and then to carry out its food to the common people who were yearning for knowledge, and thus to become a missionary of civilization. Was it not just the right moment for the satisfying of this yearning? Was it not at this time that in the German poetic woods was heard a rustling which was able to breathe upon those who were longing for poetry and art a new breath of life and a new power?

The library which was founded by the Warsaw Brethren, their friends, and their wives, contained a number of books which were most closely connected with Masonry, religious, philosophical and historical. It also found room for the intellectual geniuses of antiquity, for the works of Homer, Vergil, Livy, and Tacitus. The principal place, however, was occupied by modern German literature. We find there Matthias Claudius’s

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“Wandsbecker Boten,” Jean Paul’s novels, Herder’s “Letters on the Improvement of Mankind” and his “Terpsichore,” further, Wieland and Eschenburg’s translation of Shakespeare, a few of his dramas in the translation by Schlegel which is still considered to be the best, Goethe’s idyll “Hermann and Dorethea” which had just come out, Schiller’s Ballads and dramas-all creations of modern and of the latest times. Ought not this to be an indication for us as to how we should place ourselves in reference to our time with its modern authors? For were not Schiller and Goethe at that time just such revolutionists in the field of poetry and art as our moderns are today, and many an orthodox writer raised a hue and cry on their account as is done on account of the writers of the present day. But the Warsaw Brethren stood on a higher level and believed in the power of the rising stars.-Beside these books there was a collection of paintings, copper engravings, maps, plans, coins, instruments, and, in short, everything and anything which could educate and rejoice the understanding and the sense of taste.

The above mentioned Lodge “To the Temple of Wisdom” through the year of its foundation-1805-takes us back to the time when the State of Prussia was shaken to its foundations and received such heavy blows that the Masonic edifice also trembled and was on the verge of falling. The French troops which had already become the masters of our narrower fatherland, now also took possession of the province acquired a short time before. Soon after Napoleon had held his triumphal procession into Berlin, his soldiers also garrisoned Warsaw. The life of the Lodges in Prussia ceased entirely for many years to come, whereas at Warsaw and in South Prussia, and, indeed, in all the possessions we had acquired in the former Kingdom of Poland, German Freemasonry was extinguished for ever.

The Lodges “To the Golden Candlestick” and “Frederick William to the Column” held on for a while; but when we consider that a great number of their members were Prussian officers and officials, their dissolution was the most natural thing in the world. The former continued to exist until the beginning of the year 1810 when it communicated to the Mother-Lodge the official announcement of its final dissolution. The latter the Lodge “Frederick William to the Column” -made a final attempt to save itself by

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receiving into its Halls a great number of Poles, whom it had previously declined to have anything to do with, and by giving it another name, viz, To the Samaritan;” but soon there came so many gentle and broad hints from the minister of the police that it, too, was obliged to close its doors.

Very different was the affairs in the Lodge “To the Temple of Wisdom” or as it was more properly called “Swiatynia Madrosci,” for this Lodge was not really a German Lodge at all. Its members were Poles and in their proceedings only the Polish language was used, the correspondence with the Grand “Landes-Loge” being carried on in Polish with the German translation annexed. When the Lodge was constituted, the Grand “Landes-Loge” had insisted on one condition only, namely that the master of the chair should know German. This condition was fulfilled by the first Master of the Chair, the Royal Polish ex-adjutant general and colonel, Peter von Reyck; all the rest of the names are pure Polish and for the best part belong to the better noble families. The “Swiatynia Madrosci,” lost nothing through the confusion caused by the war. On the contrary, it even gained something, with the surrender, it is true, of what was not hard to sacrifice, for it separated itself from the Mother-Lodge in Berlin, and advocated the re-establishment of the late Polish Grand Orient. But we need not judge too harshly. If the new condition of things restored their fatherland to them, is it to be wondered at that they preferred to return to it? Moreover, the Prussian supremacy, on account of the shortness of its duration, had had little opportunity of demonstrating to the annexed state the advantages of its system. If, therefore, we wish to be seen just, we must not reproach them too severely with their defection. But, for all that, the words with which only a few years before they addressed the Grand “Landes-Loge” in their petition for a Constitution fall very strangely on our ears:—“We assure you,” they declared, “most solemnly as Brethren that we shall endeavour to make ourselves worthy of your love,” and “that our election as Brethren and members shall take place in a legal and practical manner as far as human power and knowledge can effect it, in order that we may receive members that will be worthy of our association; this we assure you most solemnly, for we understand the value and necessity of it. Each one of us, therefore, will strive, by a faithful observance of the duties of the Order, to prove himself worthy of the Constitution that is granted to us.” And how lacking in love was the farewell which the daughter took of the mother! No word of regret is

to be found in her communications; on the contrary, we are struck with the intentionally business-like tone.

As such the Lodge “Swiatynia Madrosci,” was, it is true, closed. All the members, however, united with a number of the former Brethren, and on January 9th 1809 opened the new Lodge “Le Temple d’Isis,” which was nothing but the Lodge of the same name which had existed before the Prussian seizure. Unfortunately, its sole aim was, by a vigorous suppression of everything German, to bring Polish nationality into the foreground, and by removal of all connection with Prussian Freemasonry to revive the Polish ex-Grand Orient.

For the sake of completeness it must also be mentioned that beside our Lodges the Strict Observance intended to establish Lodges. But by what trifles important things are sometimes frustrated is displayed in a letter written by the Master of the Chair of the Lodge “To the Golden Candlestick,” who wrote on this point as follows:-Among other things it is said that Herr Goldbeck, the postmaster-general of this town, has been entrusted by the heads of the Strict Observance with the task of founding a Lodge here. No objection can be raised against this man on the subject of a moral life, but as he has withdrawn entirely from society, having got married only a short time ago, and being still desperately in love with his wife-in other words, is at present useless for any kind of business, there is nothing to fear at least as far as he is concerned; but this state of things cannot last for ever.” Neither at that time or later did anything become of the Strict Observance. Perhaps “Brother Goldbeck was still desperately in love with his wife and useless for any kind of business.

III Freemasonry in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

The Grand Duchy of Warsaw had owed its existence to the condescension of Napoleon. Frederic Augustus, King of Saxony and Grand Duke of

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Warsaw was nothing but the vassal of the great conqueror. Would it not have been very natural that the French should also take possession of the Lodges? What was there in the way of their substituting Lodges of their own system for those that had been suppressed? But they did not do this. It is true that the Grand Orient of France, which moreover, already possessed several Lodges in the Kingdom of Poland, very soon founded the Lodge “De la Fraternité;” nevertheless, it not only did not attack the existing Lodges, but it managed to establish friendly relations between both systems. If, therefore, from this side no danger threatened the Prussian Lodges, it might have been assumed that, as the next liege lord in the country was the King of Saxony, he would, in case of any aversion for the Prussian Lodges, have replaced them by Saxon Lodges. In that way the Lodges would have remained German. But this was not done either. The Saxons made no attempt whatever to make their influence felt in the country, and that simply because they had already accomplished little enough themselves in their own country on account of the variety of their systems. Further, the matter had no interest whatever for Frederic Augustus, for he was not a Freemason himself.

The field was thrown open to the Poles, and that they now occupied is as much as possible to their own profit, must not, as already stated above, be taken amiss of them. We can only blame the way in which they treated the existing Prussian Lodges, which in part had been Mother-Lodges to them.

A prominent position, as we have already seen, was taken by the Lodge “Le Temple d’Isis,” which had arisen out of the “Swiatynia Madrosci.” It was joined by older Lodges which during the Prussian occupation had remained inactive, and it was strengthened by new foundations in Warsaw itself and then in Cracow, Thorn, Bromberg, etc. The ground was thus ready for the re-opening of an independent Grand Lodge. On January 22nd 1810 was constituted the Grand Orient National du Duché de Varsovie.

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The Grand Orient National quickly extended its borders; in the following year it had already 13 Lodges under its jurisdiction. The year 1812 acted, of course, as a check with its awful confusions caused by the war, so that for some time work in the Lodge ceased of itself. In October 1813, however, the waves of the wild struggle had become somewhat wild again; at any rate, the Grand Orient and a few of its Lodges gradually resumed their activity.

The war had also swept away many victims among the Freemasons. On March 12th 1814 the Grand Orient held a funeral Lodge act for Prince Poniatowski. We Germans, too, gladly acknowledge the glorious deeds of this man who, after having been wounded in the battle of the nations at Leipzig, found a hero's death in the waters of the Elster. At these funeral rites in its halls the Grand Orient set up the portrait of the deceased, as well as other souvenirs, and all the arrangements were carried out with great ostentation and solemnity. A wish of the general public, all classes of which were closely attached to the deceased, was met by throwing open the lordly apartments to every one for the space of three days. By a resolution of Grand Lodge 4000 florins were distributed among the poor and wounded. The funeral oration was delivered by Francis Morawski, Poniatowski's commander-in-chief, who had also taken a prominent part in the battle of Leipzig. This Francis Morawski is previously mentioned as a speaker in a Field Lodge at Sedan, from which it is clear that Field Lodges were also formed during this war. The higher grade officers, when they had recognised one another as Brethren, being now met together in large numbers, were glad to make use of this institution which for a few hours diverted their minds from the wretchedness and misery of the war, and raised them to something higher.

During those times officers were among the most zealous of Masons; this class more than any other pressed forward to join the Lodges in considerable numbers. Thus, for example, the Lodge "The United Brethren of Poland," to which Prince Poniatowski belonged, was composed almost exclusively of high-grade officers. More striking-much more striking-it is, of course, when we find the Catholic Church also represented in the Lodges, and it was probably quite an exceptional case that a real Prince Bishop was a Freemason. The name of the Prince Bishop Puzina deserves to be specially

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enrolled in the annals on account of account of this his daring courage and his freedom from prejudice.

Of the remaining members-to mention only a few-our attention is drawn to the following, on account of their position in their Lodges and at the same time because they deserved well of their country:- Louis Guttakowski, the Grand Master of the Grand Orient, a most eminent lawyer; at the same time he was the President of the War Council, of the Administrative Council and of the Senate; of lasting worth is his work entitled "Poland's Unhappy Fate," -Luszczewski, the Minister of the Interior and of Public Worship, the highly cultured Master of the Chair of the Lodge "Isis,"-Dmuszewski, the poet and excellent translator,--Osinski, also well known as a poet and a translator of Corneille and Voltaire,--Mattusiewicz, the translator of Horace, who only devoted himself to this kind of study in his leisure hours, whose principal province, however, was political finance; without exaggeration he was Poland's only finance minister, who during those hard times saved many millions to the state-treasury, -Baron de Bignon, the French Minister resident at Warsaw; he possessed an unusually skilful pen as a publicist, so that Napoleon left a considerable sum of money in his last will for the composing of a history of French diplomacy since the 18th of Brumaire; he accomplished this task by writing his brilliant "Histoire de France depuis le 18 Brumaire jusqu'à la Paix de Tilsit;" his "Souvenirs d'un Diplomate: la Pologne 1811-1813" are also well known,--Generals Count Tyskiewicz, Uminski, and Dabrowski, whose wounded bodies bore witness to the heroic courage which they had shown in the great battles of the year 1813, and before and after in all struggles for the independence of their native country, &c.

In conclusion it may be noticed that the only Lodge which was subject to the Grand Orient of France, viz. "De la Fraternité;" in no way felt itself isolated in this position, for a very lively and not only a superficial intercourse existed between it and the Grand Orient National. Moreover, in 1811 both Grand Orients had concluded a special mutual agreement as regards the acceptance of members.

IV. Freemasonry in Russian Poland.

In 1815 Poland was divided for the fourth time, and the kingdom stood henceforth under the rule of a Russian Viceroy. Freemasonry was not essentially affected by the alteration of territory which was thus again brought about. Of the Lodges that belonged to the Grand Orient National du Duche dé Varsovie, those at Thorn, at Bromberg and at Posen, naturally withdrew; otherwise the general aspect of things did not change. In particular, nothing is to be noticed of a union between the Lodges of Russia and Poland, as might have been well expected. On the contrary, their connection remained very loose, nor was it drawn closer together by the correspondence which was carried on for some time with the St. Petersburg Grand Lodge “Astræa,” for the Poles had anything but sympathy for their conquerors, and where could the Russians have suddenly received the necessary enthusiasm from? Moreover, they had enough to do with their own affairs.

Thus, as already stated, the status quo remained. The Grand Orient National du Duche dé Varsovie dropped the last part of its title, and instead called itself the Grand Orient de Pologne; its aims, its institutions, and even its officials suffered no change. Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, who had accepted the office of Grand Master as early as 1812, after the death of Guttakowski, still held that position.

It is true that the first official function of the Grand Orient was anything but pleasing. When Alexander greeted his Kingdom of Poland in November 1815 and at the same time sojourned three days in the capital, the Grand Orient had illuminated its windows in most gorgeous manner, and on a transparent were to be read the words “Recepto Cæsare Felices,” an inscription which would have better been unwritten, or were the authors of it really so blind that they had learnt nothing from the past? Otherwise the Grand Orient was very prosperous and extended its borders very considerably. After a three years’ activity this Grand Orient, which by the

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separation of the three Lodges that had gone over to Prussia during the year of transition, had shrunk to 10 Daughter-Lodges, again already numbered 33, 8 of which were at Warsaw, and 2 at Vilna, where, too, the Provincial Lodge for Lithuania had its seat; further, there was one of each at the following towns: Cracow, Kalisz, Lublin, Minsk, Novgorod, Plock, &c. In consequence of the humble funds that were collected from this large numbers of members, it was also possible to set about building a new Grand Lodge, for which 300,000 Polish Florins were placed at the disposal of the promoters. The Grand Orient used every endeavour to be just to all the educated classes of the population; it also filled up the principal offices with Brethren of French and German descent. As before, it worked with high Degrees. The public of the single Lodges belonged altogether to the best circles, and among the names many were of high repute. In comparison with previous years a decrease in the number of officers makes itself perceptible, their places being now taken by the learned professions. We may now quote names such as the above mentioned Grand Master and Minister of Public Worship, Stanislaus Kostka Potocki, the founder of the Warsaw University, -Mianowski, the anatomist and physiologist,--Professor Strumillo, the creator of the Botanical Gardens at Vilna,--Professor Rustem of Vilna, the portrait -painter, --Chodzko, the Lithuanian writer of legendary history, --Brodzinski, the lyric and epic poet, Huminicki, the dramatist,--Count Brzostowski and Dominic Moninszko, the great philanthropists who released their peasants from "Robot" (statute labour) and who also started on their estates machine works, iron foundries, glass works, and mead manufactories. They erected boys' and girls' schools, and also had the children there taught gardening, the keeping of bees, forestry and hygiene. At their deaths the whole of their estates with all of the appurtenances thereof passed over into the hands of the peasants.

In the previous chapter a reference was made to the interest taken by the clergy in Freemasonry. During this period an even greater participation is noticeable. The above mentioned Prince Bishop Puzina we find again as the Master of the Chair of the Lodge "The Zealous Lithuanian" at Vilna, and many followed suit. In the same Lodge there was quite a number of prelates, canons and chaplains. Vice versa, we might say, Jews made their appearance for the first time in the Polish Lodges. The list of the Lodge "Bouclier du Nord" at Warsaw numbered 8 Jewish members all of whom were businessmen.

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It was just at this juncture that the field, in which the seed had begun to spring up so well and was promising a still fuller development in the future, was laid waste by that terrible storm which here as well as in Russia washed away stalk and fruit, seed and soil, in fact everything. The reasons why the Russian authorities had closed the Lodges in Russia were the same for Poland; not only that secret societies existed here with similar tendencies, but the leaders of the Russian conspirators had also entered into direct communication with the Poles. For this Freemasonry was no more responsible in the one country than in the other.

Conclusion

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis! “Times are changing and we are changing in them!”

But in reference to Freemasonry in Russia this has not yet proved to be the case. Why, we ask ourselves involuntarily, has not the prohibition been removed in quieter times? What reproach is thrown into the teeth of Freemasonry at the present day? The accusations are still the same by which it has been persecuted since it came into existence, and wherever it has tried to strike root, without the slightest evidence having been produced to prove them. They are the same accusations with which it has been charged again and again here, too, in Germany by its enemies, namely that Freemasonry made use of its secret meetings to propagate political opinions which were dangerous to the state, and to spread irreligiousness. As far as the dangers political of opinions are concerned, we Germans ask the simple question:-- Could men like Frederic the Great, the Emperor William I, and the Emperor Frederic have, in that case, been Freemasons? Would the Kings of Prussia, who did not themselves belong to the Lodge, have regularly requested a prince of the royal house to be the patron? And the Freemasons religion! That the Freemason follows with great interest every new phenomenon in this department, and discusses it in the meetings goes without saying; but this right which every educated man enjoys, must surely be also yielded to him. Otherwise he cultivates above all the ethical side of religion, and for the rest he lets every one seek his salvation in his own way. And now, what

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about the “secrecy” of the “secret society?” In the first place every closed society keeps the outside world in the dark as regards its private concerns, only allowing its own members to look into them. With its members, or rather, with the receiving of them, Freemasonry, it is true, must be specially cautious and particular, for it is a moral alliance which cannot obtain its object in any other way than by seeking to win over as its disciples only men of highly moral character. As this alliance is spread over the whole earth, and its communities number hundreds of thousands, certain secret tokens and words which are understood by all, are necessary in order that no unworthy person may force his way into its meetings. Finally, these tokens are simpler than papers of identification which under circumstances could not at once be recognised at such; for instance, a German visits a Spanish Lodge where perhaps there is no Brother who speaks German. This is really all there is of “secrecy” in Freemasonry; there is no reason whatever why an outsider might not listen to the rest. In the meetings an attempt is made, as has already been hinted at, by means of lectures especially on ethical subjects, to create in the members a taste for all that is beautiful, good, and true, and to lift their minds and souls out of the prosaic world of every day life to more ideal heights. Further, we endeavour by means of amusements, music, and not too expensive banquets, to draw the hearts of individuals nearer together. The Lodge is meant to be a home for each Brother, and this home he should also find when haply his lot is cast in far off lands, the Brethren in those lands being under the obligation to aid him by word and deed. “Do Good” is the motto that beams forth from every Lodge in golden letters. The wives and children of deceased Brethren are assisted as much as possible. Members themselves, who have fallen upon evil days through no fault of their own, are set upon their feet again. For solitary old members homes are built, and as far as the means allow, charity is bestowed in an abundant degree on needy outsiders as well as on needy Brethren. Does such an alliance really deserve the attacks with which the orthodox in both countries persecute it? One would rather think that they feel themselves compelled to give their assistance to an association which carries out in word and deed the injunction “Love one another.”

.....

All Bolsheviks were Jews.

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The Bolsheviks (Russian: Большеви́к, derived from bolshinstvo, "majority") were a faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) which split apart from the Menshevik faction at the Second Party Congress in 1903 and ultimately became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks seized power in Russia during the October Revolution phase of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and founded the Soviet Union.

Bolsheviks were an organization of professional revolutionaries under a strict internal hierarchy governed by the principle of democratic centralism and quasi-military discipline, who considered themselves as a vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat. Their beliefs and practices were often referred to as Bolshevism. The party was founded by Vladimir Lenin, who also led it in the October Revolution.

.....
Henry Makow
2-14-7

In October, a reader sent a penetrating question: "When Bolshevism took over Russia, they tried to eliminate religion. Their stated philosophy was atheism and they closed Christian Churches and killed or imprisoned the clergy."

"However, did they also close Jewish synagogues and kill or imprison the rabbis? The answer to this question will explain many things about the early days of Communism and I hope you can provide the truth."

Last week, I stumbled across the answer in a book by American historian Edwin Schoonmaker:

"Fifteen years after the Bolshevik Revolution was launched to carry out the Marxist program, the editor of the American Hebrew could write:
"According to such information that the writer could secure while in Russia a few weeks ago, not one Jewish synagogue has been torn down, as have hundreds;^a perhaps thousands of the Greek Catholic Churches. ... In Moscow and other large cities one can see Christian churches in the process of destruction...the Government needs the location for a large building,"
(American Hebrew, Nov. 18, 1932, p. 12) Apostate Jews, leading a revolution that was to destroy religion as the "opiate of the people" had

somehow spared the synagogues of Russia." ("Democracy and World Dominion," 1939, p.211)

If the Communists hated God and religion so much, why didn't they destroy synagogues too? Do Christianity and Judaism worship the same God? Or can a religion that claims an exclusive God be a religion? Could it be that Judaism is a really a secret society like Freemasonry where the members don't know the hidden agenda, which is in fact expressed by Communism? Although many religious Jews were anti Communist, Schoonmaker's information suggests there may be an affinity between Talmudic Judaism and pagan satanic Communism.

.....

Religious Jews are anti zionist and therefore fight satan,or they should,because zionism is anti semetic and vile,NWO = one world leader=anti christ

Zionism is evil,dam they ARE going to blow iSRAEL of the map soon,as spelled out in Albert Pikes letter,zionism is the NWO.

If anyone reading this has never read Pikes letter go to google and research it,its real

Religious Jews are anti zionist and therefore fight satan,or they should,because zionism is anti semetic and vile,NWO = one world leader=anti christ

Zionism is evil,dam they ARE going to blow iSRAEL of the map soon,as spelled out in Albert Pikes letter,zionism is the NWO.

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The Rothschilds, who founded and control Is-ra-el, are to expand its boundaries in the middleeast. Israel is the vehicle from which to destroy the rest of the civilized world as it will be the trigger point of the third world war which will be/has been concocted to destroy all existing systems, beliefs, and populations to pave the way for the one world system. Israel will then be central command.

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"Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them."
Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamed

Remember Askenazis *claim* to be Jews, but they are not historically. They are Khazarians from the Cacausus Mts in Eastern Russia. It's true that those who are pulling the strings, at a glance, claim themselves as Jews. However, the Khazarians infiltrated and "converted" to Judaism in the 6-7th century. It's a deception within a deception. Jews are the real stringpullers, but they historically are NOT Hebrews, but Khazars. "Jew" is a term which did not exist until the 18th century.

check out Iamthewitness.com to learn what Alex Jones and David Icke do not address and lets further the ball down the field by getting the entire picture of the "Illuminati" pyramid. Zionism is the largest "block" of the pyramid and is lleast talked about. Why?

Yakov Mikhaylovich Sverdlov (Russian: Яков Миха́йлович Свердло́в), born Yankel Movshevich Eiman (Russian: Я́нкель Мовшевич Э́йман); known underpseudonyms "Andrey", "Mikhalych", "Max", "Smirnov", "Permyakov" (June 3 [O.S. May 22] 1885 – March 16, 1919) was a Bolshevik party leader and an official of pre-Soviet Union Soviet Russia. 33 years old Yakov Sverdlov (Yankel Movshevich Eiman), the son of a Jewish engraver, ordered the execution of Tsar Nicholas II and his family on July 16, 1918.

He was born in Nizhny Novgorod to Jewish parents. He joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1902, and then the Bolshevik faction, supporting Vladimir Lenin. He was involved in the 1905 revolution.

After his arrest in June 1906, for most of the time until 1917 he was either imprisoned or exiled.

After the 1917 February Revolution he returned to Petrograd from exile and was re-elected to the Central Committee. He played an important role in planning the October Revolution. Research in 1990 by the Moscow playwright and historian Edvard Radzinsky uncovered Sverdlov's role in the execution of Tsar Nicholas II and his family.

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A close ally of Vladimir Lenin, Sverdlov played an important role in persuading leading Bolsheviks to accept the controversial decisions to close down the Constituent Assembly and the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. It was claimed that Lenin provided the theories and Sverdlov made sure they worked.

He is sometimes referred to as the first head of state of the Soviet Union but this is not correct since the Soviet Union only came into existence in 1922. As chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) he was the de facto head of state of the Russian SFSR from shortly after the October Revolution until the time of his death.

He died of influenza in Oryol during the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic.

The city of Yekaterinburg was renamed Sverdlovsk in 1924 to honour Sverdlov. However, in 1991, as Russia's leader Boris Yeltsin helped return pre-Soviet names in the Soviet Union, the name was changed back to Yekaterinburg.

The Imperial Russian Navy destroyer leader Novik (commissioned in 1913) was renamed Yakov Sverdlov in 1923. The first ship of Sverdlov class cruisers was also named after him.

A slab of marble bearing his name is in Lenin's Mausoleum in Moscow

Ekaterinburg Opera and Ballet House.

This beautiful building was opened in 1912 due to growing demand from the theater-loving public.

The theater was designed by St Petersburg architect Semenov, who won a nation-wide design competition with his submission 'ÒSvetlanaÓ. The theater was known by this name for a long time afterwards. The interior of the building is equally sumptuous. There is usually one performance held here each weekday and two on weekends from September to July. On the boulevard just across from the Opera House stands a statue of Yakov Sverdlov, the prominent Bolshevik, leading orator, and at one point the assumed successor to Lenin, after whom Ekaterinburg was named during the Soviet era.

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The Prop Masters: Jews and Communism article here.

How Many Did Communist Regimes Murder? - detailed study here. with the full statistics here.

"Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds. Let them be thousands; let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin and Uritzky, Zinoviev and Vólodarsky, let there be floods of the blood of the bourgeoisie--more blood! As much as possible!" -- Zinoviev (Grigorij Apfelbaum), Krasnaya Gazeta, Sept. 1, 1918

"From the days of Spartacus-Weishaupt, to those of Karl Marx, to those of Trotsky . . . this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development and envious malevolence, and impossible equality has been steadily growing. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the nineteenth century; and now at last this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become the undisputed masters of that enormous empire." -- Winston Churchill, Sunday Illustrated Herald 8 February 1920, London.

"In this new organization of Humanity, the children of Israel, scattered to all corners of the earth, will be transformed, with no opposition at all, into the ruling class, above all, they will gather the working masses under their exclusive control. The Governments of the nations composing the future universal Republic will fall, without force, into the hands of the Israelites, thanks to the victory of the proletariat. Private property then will be eliminated by governments of the Jewish race who will administer, everywhere, the public funds." -- Letter from Marx to Baruch (Oscar) Levi.

"While Europe is aflame, while its victims scream, while its dogs howl in the conflagration, and while its very smoke descends in darker and even darker shades upon our Continent, the Jews, or at least a part of them and by no means the most unworthy ones, endeavor to escape from the burning building, and wish to retire from Europe into Asia, from the somber scene of our disaster into the sunny corner of their Palestine".-- Letter from Oscar Levy to George Pitt-Rivers, July 1920.

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By the way, who's going to help the Jews this time? They've run out of friends completely - and once the USA realizes what the unspeakable Jew has done to it they will be finished. They can run, but they can't hide.
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THE Russian Revolution was not a sudden movement of the people. Long before the war it had raised its head. The Duma itself came into existence as one of its fruits; but when the war began all parties joined in patriotic support of the Russian armies and laid aside for the time their cherished grievances. The war was immensely popular. Slavonic nationalism turned against Austria-Hungary and Germany who were bent upon crushing the Slavonic sister state, Serbia. The Liberal elements saw in Germany the stronghold of reaction and of militarism, and trusted that its downfall would be followed by that of Russian autocracy. But so glaring was the incapacity of the old régime, that a union was formed during the war by all the Liberal parties. This group united on the single aim of pushing on the war, and silently preparing for the moment when the catastrophe to Czarism was to come.

This was long before the revolution. But a conviction of the necessity of immediate change gradually came to all. The Czar him-self brought matters to an issue. His vacillation, his appointment of ministers who were not only reactionary, but were suspected of being German tools, were too much for even honest supporters of the Imperial régime. Some of these reactionaries, it is true, were easily driven from power. In 1915 Sukhomlinov and Maklakov were overthrown by the influence of the army and the Duma. But in 1916 the parasites came to life again. M. Boris Stuermer became Prime Minister, and appointed as Minister of the Interior the notorious Protopopov. On November 14, 1916, Miliukov, the leader of the Constitutional Democrats, or Cadet Party, attacked the Premier in one of the fiercest speeches ever made in the Russian Duma. Stuermer was compelled to resign, but his successor, M. Trepov, though an honest man with high ambitions, was forced to retain Protopopov at the Interior. For a moment there was calm. But it was the calm before the storm.

The Russian Revolution, now recognized as the most bloody revolution in history, began with the assassination of a single man. This man was Gregory

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Novikh, known throughout the world under the name of Rasputin. A Siberian peasant by birth, immoral, filthy in person, untrained in mind, he had early received the nickname of Rasputin, which means "ne'er-do-well," on account of his habits. A drunkard, and a libertine always, he posed as a sort of saint and miracle worker, let his hair grow long, and tramped about the world bare-foot.

Rasputin had left his district of Tobolsk and at Moscow had started a new cult, where mystical séances were mingled with debauchery. Through Madame Verubova he had been introduced to the Empress herself. He became the friend of Count Witte, of Stuermer, and Protopopov was his tool.

Rumor credited him with exercising an extraordinary influence upon the Czarina, and through her upon the Czar. This influence was thought to be responsible for many of the Czar's unpopular policies. In times of great public agitation the wildest rumors are easily taken for truth and the absurd legends which were easily associated with his name were greedily accepted by people of every rank. The influence of Rasputin over the Imperial family was denied again and again. It has been said from authoritative sources that the Czar did not know him by sight, and that the Czarina knew him only as a superstitious and neurotic woman might know some fortune teller or other charlatan. Nevertheless the credulous public believed him to be the evil spirit of the Imperial circle, and every false move, every unpopular act, was ascribed to his baneful influence. But such a career could not last long, and the end became a tragedy.

Several times Rasputin had been attacked, but had escaped. At last, on the 29th of December, 1916, Prince Yusapov, a young man of wealth and position, invited him to dine with him at his own home. The Prince came for him in his own car. Entering the dining-room, they found there the Grand Duke Dmitri Paylovitch. M. Purishkevitch, a member of the Duma, had acted as chauffeur, and he followed him in. The three told him that he was to die and he was handed a pistol that he might kill himself; instead of doing so, he shot at the Grand Duke, but missed, and then was shot in turn by his captors. The noise attracted the attention of the police who inquired what had happened. "I have just killed a dog," was the reply.

His body was taken in an automobile to the Neva River, a hole cut in the ice, and weighted with stones, it was dropped into the waters. On the next day his executioners notified the police of what they had done, and the news was

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announced at the Imperial Theatre, whose audience went wild with enthusiasm, and sang the National Hymn. No legal action was ever taken against Rasputin's executioners. His body was recovered and given honorable burial. The Czarina, according to report, following the coffin to the grave. And so disappeared from the Imperial Court one evil force.

But his tool, Alexander Protopopov, still survived. Protopopov was an extraordinary man. In 1916 he had visited England and France and made a splendid impression. His speeches, full of fire and patriotism, were regarded as the best made by any deputation that had come from Russia. But on his re-turn to Petrograd he fell completely into the hands of the Court party. He became associated with Rasputin, and his wild talk and restless conduct suggested to many that his mind had become affected.

After the death of Rasputin, the meeting of the Duma, which should have taken place on January 25, 1917, was postponed for a month. The censorship was drawn tighter, the members of the secret police were greatly increased, and a deliberate endeavor, under the direction of Protopopov was made to encourage an abortive revolution, so that its overthrow might establish the reactionaries in power. But the attempt failed.

During January and February the people were calm. No one wanted revolution then. On February 9th, the labor members of the War Industry Committee were arrested. This was regarded as plainly provocative, and M. Miliukov wrote appeals to the people for patience. These were suppressed, but no disturbance ensued. A British Commission, then on a visit to Russia, reported that there was no danger of revolution. But the people were hungry. Speakers in the Duma discussed the food problem. It became harder and harder to procure bread, and little that was practical seemed to be done to improve the situation, though in some parts of the country there were large surplus stocks. On March 8th crowds gathered around the bakery shops, and looted several of them. The next day the crowds in the streets increased. Groups of Cossacks rode here and there, fraternizing with the people. They, too, were hungry. In the after-noon two workmen were arrested for disorder by the police. A band of Cossacks freed them. Street speakers began to appear here and there, and crowds gathered to listen to their fiery denunciations of the government.

On March 11th, General Khabalov, military Governor of the city, issued a proclamation announcing that the police had orders to disperse all crowds,

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and that any workman who did not return to work on Monday morning would be sent to the trenches. The main streets of the city were cleared and guarded by the police and soldiery. The crowds were enormous, and disorderly, and more than two hundred of the rioters were killed. Yet it seemed as if the government had the situation in a firm grasp, though an ominous incident was that the Pavlovsk regiment on being ordered to fire upon the mob, mutinied and had to be ordered to their quarters.

Meantime Rodzianko, the President of the Duma, had telegraphed to the Czar :

Situation serious. Anarchy reigns in Capital. Government is paralyzed. Transport food and fuel supplies are utterly disorganized. General discontent is growing.

Disorderly firing is going on in streets. Various companies of soldiers are shooting at each other. It is absolutely necessary to invest someone, who enjoys the confidence of the people with powers to form a new government. No time must be lost, and delay may be fatal. I pray to God that in this hour responsibility may not fall on the wearer of the crown.

The Prime Minister, Prince Golitzin, acting under power which he had received from the Czar, prorogued the Duma. But the Duma refused to be prorogued. Its President, Rodzianko, holding in his hand the order for dissolution, announced that the Duma was now the sole constitutional authority of Russia.

During the night following, the soldiers at the Capital, and the Socialists, decided upon their course. The soldiers determined that they would not fire upon their civilian brothers. The Socialists planned an alternative scheme of government.

On March the 12th, the city was taken possession of by a mob. The Preo Crajenski Guards refused to fire upon the crowd. The Volynsky regiment, sent to coerce them, joined in the mutiny. Followed by the mob, the two regiments seized the Arsenal. A force of 25,-000 soldiers was in the revolt. At 11 A. M., the Courts of Law were set on fire and the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul was seized. The police, fighting desperately, were hunted from their quarters, their papers destroyed and the prisoners, political and criminal, released from the jails.

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During the day the Duma kept in constant session, awaiting the Emperor, who did not come. Telegram after telegram was sent him, each more urgent. There is reason to believe that these telegrams never reached the Czar. When information finally did come to him it was too late. Meantime the Duma appointed an executive committee. Their names were Rodzianko, Nekrasov, Konovalov, Dmitrikov, Lvov, Rjenski, Karaulov, Miliukov, Schledlovski, Schulgin, Tcheidze and Kerensky. The workmen and soldiers also formed a committee, which undertook to influence the troops now pouring into Petrograd. But the center of the revolution was still the Duma, and crowds gathered to listen to its speeches. In the evening Protopopov surrendered to the Russian guards, but General Khabalov still occupied the Admiralty building with such forces as were faithful.

On March 13th it became evident that the army in the field was accepting the authority of the provisional government. The Duma committee was composed mainly of men of moderate political views. They moved slowly, fearing on the one hand the Reactionaries who still preserved their loyalty to the Czar, and on the other hand the Council of Labor, with its extreme views, and its influence with the troops. The siege of the Admiralty building was ended by the surrender of General Khabalov. The police, however, were still keeping up a desultory resistance, but the mob were hunting them like wild beasts. On Wednesday, the 14th of March, the revolution was over.

The Executive Committee of the Duma and the Council of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, now universally known as the Soviet, were working in harmony. Every hour proclamations were issued, some of them foolish, some of them, it is thought, inspired by German agents, and some of them wise and patriotic. One of the most unfortunate of these proclamations was one to the army directing that "the orders of the War Committee must be obeyed, saving only on those occasions when they shall contravene the orders and regulations of the labor deputies and military delegates." This same proclamation abolished saluting for private soldiers off duty. It was the beginning of the destruction of the Russian military power. The proclamation of the Duma committee itself was admirable :

CITIZENS:

The Provisional Executive Committee of the Duma, with the aid and support of the garrison of the capital and its inhabitants, has now triumphed over the

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baneful forces of the old régime in such a manner as to enable it to proceed to the more stable organization of the executive power. With this object, the Provisional Committee will name ministers of the first national cabinet men whose past public activity assures them the confidence of the country.

The new cabinet will adopt the following principles as the basis of its policy:

1. An immediate amnesty for all political and religious offenses, including military revolts, acts of terrorism, and agrarian crimes.
2. Freedom of speech, of the press, of associations and labor organizations, and the freedom to strike; with an extension of these liberties to officials and troops, in so far as military and technical conditions permit.
3. The abolition of social, religious, and racial restrictions and privileges.
4. Immediate preparation for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, which, with universal suffrage as a basis, shall establish the governmental régime and the constitution of the country.
5. The substitution for the police of a national militia, with elective heads and subject to the self-governing bodies.
6. Communal elections to be carried out on the basis of universal suffrage.
7. The troops that have taken part in the revolutionary movement shall not be disarmed, but they are not to leave Petrograd.
8. 'While strict military discipline must be maintained on active service, all restrictions upon soldiers in the enjoyment of social rights granted to other citizens are to be abolished.

Meantime the Emperor, "the Little Father," at first thoroughly incredulous of the gravity of the situation, had at last become alarmed. He appointed General Ivanov Commander-in-Chief of the army, and ordered him to proceed to Petrograd at the head of a division of loyal troops. General Ivanov set out, but his train was held up at Tsarskoe Selo, and he returned to Pskov. The Czar himself then started for the city, but he, too, was held up at the little station of Bologoi, where work-men had pulled up the track, and he returned to Pskov.

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He sent for Ruzsky and declared that he was ready to yield to the Duma and grant a responsible ministry. Ruzsky advised him to get in touch with Rodzianko, and as a result of a telephone communication with Rodzianko and with several of his trusted generals, it became clear that there was no other course than abdication. Guchkov and Shulgin, messengers from the Duma, arrived on the evening of March 15th, and found the Emperor alone, except for his aide-de-camp, Count Fredericks.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"You must abdicate," Guchkov told him, "in favor of your son, with the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch as Regent."

The Emperor sat for a long time silent. "I cannot be separated from my boy," he said. "I will hand the throne to my brother." Taking a sheet of paper he wrote as follows:

By the Grace of God, We, Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, to all our faithful subjects:

In the course of a great struggle against a foreign enemy, who has been endeavoring for three years to enslave our country, it has pleased God to send Russia a further bitter trial. Internal troubles have threatened to compromise the progress of the war. The destinies of Russia, the honor of her heroic army, the happiness of her people, and the whole future of our beloved country demand that at all costs victory shall be won. The enemy is making his last efforts, and the moment is near when our gallant troops, in concert with their glorious Allies, will finally overthrow him.

In these days of crisis we have considered that our nation needs the closest union of all its forces for the attainment of victory. In agreement with the Imperial Duma, we have recognized that for the good of our land we should abdicate the throne of the Russian state and lay down the supreme power.

Not wishing to separate ourselves from our beloved son, we bequeath our heritage to our brother, the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch, with our blessing upon the future of the Russian throne. We bequeath it to him with the charge to govern in full unison with the national representatives who

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may sit in the legislature, and to take his inviolable oath to them in the name of our well-beloved country.

We call upon all faithful sons of our land to fulfil this sacred and patriotic duty in obeying their Emperor at this painful moment of national trial, and to aid him, together with the representatives of the nation, to lead the Russian people in the way of prosperity and glory.

May God help Russia.

So ended the reign of Nicholas the Second, Czar of all the Russias. The news of the Czar's abdication spread over the world with great rapidity, and was received by the Allies with mixed feelings. The Czar had been scrupulously loyal to the alliance. He was a man of high personal character, and his sympathies on the whole, liberal; but he was a weak man in a position in which even a strong man might have failed. He was easily influenced, especially by his wife. Warned again and again of the danger before him, he constantly promised improvement, only to fail in keeping his promises. He deeply loved his wife, and yielded continually to her unwise advice.

The Empress Alexandra Feodorovna is but another instance of a devoted queen who de-throned her consort. She believed in Divine Right and looked with suspicion upon popular leaders. Her one object in life was to hand on the Russian crown to her son, with no atom of its power diminished. She surrounded herself and her husband with scoundrels and charlatans.

On the whole, the feeling among the Allies was one of relief. There was a general distrust of the influences which had been surrounding the Czar. The patriotism of the Grand Duke Michael was well known, and a government conducted by him was sure to be a great improvement. But it was not to be. Before the news of the abdication reached Petrograd a new ministry had been formed by the Duma. Miliukov announced their names and explained their credentials. The Prime Minister was Prince George Lvov. Miliukov was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guchkov Minister of War and Marine, Kerensky, a new name in the government, Minister of Justice. The ministry included representatives of every party of the left and centre.

Miliukov declared that their credentials came from the Russian revolution: "We shall not fight for the sake of power. To be in power is not a reward or

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pleasure but a sacrifice. As soon as we are told that the sacrifice is no longer needed, we shall give up our places with gratitude for the opportunity which has been accorded us."

He concluded by informing his hearers that the despot who had brought Russia to the brink of ruin would either abdicate of his free will, or be deposed. He added that the Grand Duke Michael would be appointed Regent.

This announcement at once produced an explosion. A ministry of moderates and a continuance of the Imperial government under a regency stirred the delegates of the workmen and soldiers to revolt. For a time it seemed as if the new government would disappear in the horrors of mob rule. But Kerensky saved the situation. Making his way into the meeting of the Soviet he burst into an impassioned speech.

"Comrades!" he cried, "I have been appointed Minister of Justice. No one is a more ardent Republican than I, but we must bide our time. Nothing can come to its full growth at once. We shall have our Republic but we must first win the war. The need of the moment is organization and discipline and that need will not wait."

His eloquence carried the day. The Soviet passed a resolution supporting the provisional government with only fifteen dissenting votes. But it had been made clear that the people did not approve of the regency, and on the night of the 15th of March, Prince Lvov, Kerensky and other leaders of the Duma sought out the Grand Duke Michael and informed him of the situation. The Grand Duke yielded to the people, and on Friday, March the 16th, issued a declaration which ended the power of the Romanovs in Russia :

I am firmly resolved to accept the supreme power only if this should be the desire of our great people, who must, by means of a plebiscite through their representatives in the Constituent Assembly, establish the form of government and the new fundamental laws of the Russian state. Invoking God's blessing, I, therefore, request all citizens of Russia to obey the provisional government, set up on the initiative of the Duma, and invested with plenary powers, until within as short a time as possible the Constituent Assembly elected on a basis of equal, universal and secret suffrage, shall enforce the will of the nation regarding the future form of the constitution.

With this declaration the sacred monarchy had disappeared. In one week the people had come to their own and Russia was free. But what the form of new government was to re-place the old régime was still the question. There were two rival theories as to the principles to be followed, one that of the Moderates, the other of the Extremists. The Moderates, who controlled the provisional government, were practical men. They realized that Russia was at war and that efficient administration was the great need.

The Extremists of the Soviet were a different type of men. They were profoundly ignorant of all practical questions of government; their creed was socialism. The Socialistic party in Russia may be divided into three different groups. The first, the Social Revolutionary party, came into prominence in Russia about 1900. It was composed of followers of the Russian Lavrov who believed in the socialist state, but a state which should not be a tyrant overriding the individual. Liberty was his watchword and he made his appeal not only to the workmen in the shops but with a special force to the peasant. He did not preach class war in the ordinary sense, and believed in the value of national life. To this party belonged Kerensky, more and more becoming the leader of the revolutionary movement.

The second group of the Socialist party were the Bolsheviki. This group were followers of the German Karl Marx. The revolution which they sought was essentially a class revolution. To the Bolsheviki the fate of their country mattered not at all. They were eager for peace on any terms. The only war in which they were interested was a class war; they recognized no political boundaries. The leader of this group was Vladimir Il j etch Uljanov, who, under his pen name of Lenine, was already widely known and who had now obtained the opportunity which he had long desired.

The third group were the Mensheviki. The Mensheviki believed in the importance of the working classes, but they did not ignore other classes. They were willing to use existing forms of government to carry out the reforms they desired. They saw that the Allied cause was their own cause, the cause of the workman as well as the intellectual.

The Soviet contained representatives of these three groups. It did not represent Russia, but it was in Petrograd and could exert its influence directly upon the government.

The attitude of the provisional government toward the Imperial family was at first not unkindly. The Czar and the Czarina were escorted to the Alexandrovsky Palace in Tsarskoe-Selo. The Czar for a time lived quietly as plain Nicholas Romanov. The Czarina and her children were very ill with measles, the case of the little Prince being complicated by the breaking out of an old wound in his foot. The Grand Duchess Tatiana was in a serious condition and oxygen had been administered. As his family improved in health the Czar amused himself by strolls in the palace yard, and even by shoveling snow. Later on Nicholas was transferred to Tobolsk, Siberia, and then, in May, 1918, to Yekaterinberg. His wife and his daughter Marie accompanied him to the latter place, while Alexis and his other, three daughters remained in Tobolsk. On July 20th a Russian government dispatch announced his assassination. It read as follows:

At the first session of the Central Executive Committee, elected by the Fifth Congress of the Councils, a message was made public that had been received by direct wire from the Ural Regional Council, concerning the shooting of the ex-Czar, Nicholas Romanov. Recently Yekaterinberg, the Capital of the Red Urals, was seriously threatened by the approach of Czecho-Slovak bands, and a counter-revolutionary conspiracy was discovered, which had as its object the wresting of the ex-Czar from the hands of the Council's authority. In view of this fact the President of the Ural Regional Council decided to shoot the ex-Czar, and the decision was carried out on July 16th.

The wife and the son of Nicholas Romanov had been sent to a place of security. In a de-tailed account of the execution, published in Berlin, it appeared that the Czar had been awakened at five o'clock in the morning, and informed that he was to be executed in two hours. He spent some time with a priest in his bedroom and wrote several letters. According to this account, when the patrol came to take him out for execution he was found in a state of collapse. His last words, uttered just before the executioners fired, are reported to have been "Spare my wife and my innocent and unhappy children. May my blood preserve Russia from ruin."

The Russian press, including the Socialist papers, condemned the execution as a cruel and unnecessary act. The charges of conspiracy were utterly unproven, and were merely an excuse. The Central Executive Committee, however, accepted the decision of the Ural Regional Soviet as being regular, and a decree by the Bolshevik Government declared all the property of the

former Emperor, his wife, his mother and all the members of the Imperial house, forfeit to the Soviet Republic.

Meantime the provisional government, which had taken power on the 16th of March, seemed as if it might succeed. Miliukov, whose announcement of the Regency had made him unpopular, declared for a Republic. The great army commanders for the most part accepted the revolution. The Grand Duke Nicholas was removed from his command and the other Grand Dukes were ordered not to leave Petrograd. Alexiev became commander-in-chief ; Ruzsky had the northern group of armies, Brusilov the southern ; Kornilov was in command of Petrograd, and the central group was put under the command of Lechitsky.

Reports came that discipline was improving everywhere on the front.

The plans of the government, too, met with general approval. Their policy was announced by Prince Lvov. "The new government considers it its duty to make known to the world that the object of free Russia is not to dominate other nations and forcibly to take away their territory. The object of independent Russia is a permanent peace and the right of all nations to determine their own destiny."

Kerensky, in inspiring speeches, encouraged the country to war, and declared against a separate peace. The new government announced that Poland was to receive complete independence, with a right to determine its own form of government, and its relation, if any, to Russia. In Finland the Governor, 'Sein, was removed. A Liberal was appointed Governor and the Finnish Diet was convened. A manifesto was issued on March 21st, completely restoring the Finnish constitution. To the Armenians Kerensky expressed himself as in favor of an autonomous government for them, under Russia's protection, and on March 25th, absolute equality of the Jews was proclaimed by the new government. A number of Jews were made officers in the army, and two Jewish advocates were appointed members of the Russian Senate and of the Supreme Court. On April 4th full religious liberty was proclaimed, and on the same date the Prime Minister promised a delegation of women that women would be given the right to vote.

These acts caused a general subsidence of unrest, and public good feeling was increased by the return of the political exiles and prisoners from Siberia.

A full hundred thousand of such prisoners were released, and their progress across Siberia to Russia was one grand triumphal march.

The most celebrated of these political prisoners were two women, Catherine Breshkovskaya and Marie Spiridonova. Catherine Breshkovskaya was known as the grandmother of the revolution. Forty-four years of her life were spent in exile. When she reached Petrograd she was met at the railroad depot by a military band, and carried in procession through the streets. Equally popular was Marie Spiridonova, who, though still young, had suffered martyrdom. She had been tortured with cruelty that is unprintable. Her face had been disfigured for life. The agents who had inflicted the torture were assassinated by the revolutionists.

It was a great day for Russia, and the out-look seemed full of promise.

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World War One and the Destruction of the Old Order

Red Verses White – The Russian Revolution

Civil War

With peace established with Germany, the war continued within the boundaries of Russia. As Lenin attempted to gain control over the whole country, forces loyal to the Tsar or that were anti-communist gathered strength to oppose him. This created a three-year civil war over control of the Russian state. The forces led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks were called the “Reds,” (red has been the color of revolution since the French Revolution) while forces opposed to him were termed “White” (white has traditionally been the color of royalty).

The White forces received support from the Western Allies during the internal war. The United States, England and Canada had contingents of men inside of Russia initially to guard supplies they had sent during the war, but they were in a position to fight if their governments thought necessary.

The Red Army was able to defeat the much larger White armies over the course of the three-year conflict. The Red Army was led by fanatical communists who were prepared to do what ever was necessary to preserve

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the revolution. White forces were in many cases, composed of men that were not dedicated to restoring the Tsar. A number of Red victories led to the defeat of the White forces and their dreams of returning to the rule of the Tsars.

During the civil war, Lenin imposed “War Communism” to ensure victory. For rural peasants, this meant that the food they produced was seized without payment. In the cities, workers were forbidden to strike and placed under military discipline. The results of these measures allowed the Reds to win the civil war, but caused horrible problems for the future. Farm peasants refused to plant more crops as they believed that the communists were going to take it anyway. This led to a famine that claimed the lives of 7.5 million Russians. Millions of others lived just above the starvation level.

Lenin also saw the need to stabilize the government and country by eliminating people who did not support the revolution. This period became known as the “Red Terror.” During the terror, Lenin had people inside and outside of the party eliminated to ensure the success of the communist takeover (the Bolsheviks changed their name to the Communist Party in 1918). Thousands of people disappeared during the purge, but the plan helped control the opposition to the Communist Party.

The idea of “war communism” began to receive opposition from communist themselves. The harsh treatment of people under Lenin’s plan caused a major uprising by sailors at the Kronstadt Naval Base. They were ruthlessly executed for resisting the party’s plans, but the uprising forced Lenin to re-examine his policies.

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The Jewish Role in the Bolshevik Revolution
and Russia's Early Soviet Regime

Assessing the Grim Legacy of Soviet Communism

by Mark Weber

In the night of July 16-17, 1918, a squad of Bolshevik secret police murdered Russia's last emperor, Tsar Nicholas II, along with his wife, Tsaritsa Alexandra, their 14-year-old son, Tsarevich Alexis, and their four daughters. They were cut down in a hail of gunfire in a half-cellar room of the house in Ekaterinburg, a city in the Ural mountain region, where they were being held prisoner. The daughters were finished off with bayonets. To prevent a cult for the dead Tsar, the bodies were carted away to the countryside and hastily buried in a secret grave.

Bolshevik authorities at first reported that the Romanov emperor had been shot after the discovery of a plot to liberate him. For some time the deaths of the Empress and the children were kept secret. Soviet historians claimed for many years that local Bolsheviks had acted on their own in carrying out the killings, and that Lenin, founder of the Soviet state, had nothing to do with the crime.

In 1990, Moscow playwright and historian Edvard Radzinsky announced the result of his detailed investigation into the murders. He unearthed the reminiscences of Lenin's bodyguard, Alexei Akimov, who recounted how he personally delivered Lenin's execution order to the telegraph office. The telegram was also signed by Soviet government chief Yakov Sverdlov. Akimov had saved the original telegraph tape as a record of the secret order.¹

Radzinsky's research confirmed what earlier evidence had already indicated. Leon Trotsky -- one of Lenin's closest colleagues -- had revealed years earlier that Lenin and Sverdlov had together made the decision to put the Tsar and his family to death. Recalling a conversation in 1918, Trotsky wrote:²

My next visit to Moscow took place after the [temporary] fall of Ekaterinburg [to anti-Communist forces]. Speaking with Sverdlov, I asked in passing: "Oh yes, and where is the Tsar?"

"Finished," he replied. "He has been shot."

"And where is the family?"

"The family along with him."

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"All of them?," I asked, apparently with a trace of surprise.

"All of them," replied Sverdlov. "What about it?" He was waiting to see my reaction. I made no reply.

"And who made the decision?," I asked.

"We decided it here. Ilyich [Lenin] believed that we shouldn't leave the Whites a live banner to rally around, especially under the present difficult circumstances."

I asked no further questions and considered the matter closed.

Recent research and investigation by Radzinsky and others also corroborates the account provided years earlier by Robert Wilton, correspondent of the London Times in Russia for 17 years. His account, *The Last Days of the Romanovs* - originally published in 1920, and reissued in 1993 by the Institute for Historical Review -- is based in large part on the findings of a detailed investigation carried out in 1919 by Nikolai Sokolov under the authority of "White" (anti-Communist) leader Alexander Kolchak. Wilton's book remains one of the most accurate and complete accounts of the murder of Russia's imperial family.³

A solid understanding of history has long been the best guide to comprehending the present and anticipating the future. Accordingly, people are most interested in historical questions during times of crisis, when the future seems most uncertain. With the collapse of Communist rule in the Soviet Union, 1989-1991, and as Russians struggle to build a new order on the ruins of the old, historical issues have become very topical. For example, many ask: How did the Bolsheviks, a small movement guided by the teachings of German-Jewish social philosopher Karl Marx, succeed in taking control of Russia and imposing a cruel and despotic regime on its people?

In recent years, Jews around the world have been voicing anxious concern over the specter of anti-Semitism in the lands of the former Soviet Union. In this new and uncertain era, we are told, suppressed feelings of hatred and rage against Jews are once again being expressed. According to one public opinion survey conducted in 1991, for example, most Russians wanted all Jews to leave the country.⁴ But precisely why is anti-Jewish sentiment so widespread among the peoples of the former Soviet Union? Why do so

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many Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and others blame "the Jews" for so much misfortune?

A Taboo Subject

Although officially Jews have never made up more than five percent of the country's total population,⁵ they played a highly disproportionate and probably decisive role in the infant Bolshevik regime, effectively dominating the Soviet government during its early years. Soviet historians, along with most of their colleagues in the West, for decades preferred to ignore this subject. The facts, though, cannot be denied.

With the notable exception of Lenin (Vladimir Ulyanov), most of the leading Communists who took control of Russia in 1917-20 were Jews. Leon Trotsky (Lev Bronstein) headed the Red Army and, for a time, was chief of Soviet foreign affairs. Yakov Sverdlov (Solomon) was both the Bolshevik party's executive secretary and -- as chairman of the Central Executive Committee -- head of the Soviet government. Grigori Zinoviev (Radomyslsky) headed the Communist International (Comintern), the central agency for spreading revolution in foreign countries. Other prominent Jews included press commissar Karl Radek (Sobelsohn), foreign affairs commissar Maxim Litvinov (Wallach), Lev Kamenev (Rosenfeld) and Moisei Uritsky.⁶

Lenin himself was of mostly Russian and Kalmuck ancestry, but he was also one-quarter Jewish. His maternal grandfather, Israel (Alexander) Blank, was a Ukrainian Jew who was later baptized into the Russian Orthodox Church.⁷

A thorough-going internationalist, Lenin viewed ethnic or cultural loyalties with contempt. He had little regard for his own countrymen. "An intelligent Russian," he once remarked, "is almost always a Jew or someone with Jewish blood in his veins."⁸

Critical Meetings

In the Communist seizure of power in Russia, the Jewish role was probably critical.

Two weeks prior to the Bolshevik "October Revolution" of 1917, Lenin convened a top secret meeting in St. Petersburg (Petrograd) at which the key leaders of the Bolshevik party's Central Committee made the fateful decision to seize power in a violent takeover. Of the twelve persons who took part in

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this decisive gathering, there were four Russians (including Lenin), one Georgian (Stalin), one Pole (Dzerzhinsky), and six Jews.⁹

To direct the takeover, a seven-man "Political Bureau" was chosen. It consisted of two Russians (Lenin and Bubnov), one Georgian (Stalin), and four Jews (Trotsky, Sokolnikov, Zinoviev, and Kamenev).¹⁰ Meanwhile, the Petersburg (Petrograd) Soviet -- whose chairman was Trotsky -- established an 18-member "Military Revolutionary Committee" to actually carry out the seizure of power. It included eight (or nine) Russians, one Ukrainian, one Pole, one Caucasian, and six Jews.¹¹ Finally, to supervise the organization of the uprising, the Bolshevik Central Committee established a five-man "Revolutionary Military Center" as the Party's operations command. It consisted of one Russian (Bubnov), one Georgian (Stalin), one Pole (Dzerzhinsky), and two Jews (Sverdlov and Uritsky).¹²

Contemporary Voices of Warning

Well-informed observers, both inside and outside of Russia, took note at the time of the crucial Jewish role in Bolshevism. Winston Churchill, for one, warned in an article published in the February 8, 1920, issue of the London Illustrated Sunday Herald that Bolshevism is a "worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilization and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality." The eminent British political leader and historian went on to write:¹³

There is no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian Revolution by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews. It is certainly a very great one; it probably outweighs all others. With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews. Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate, Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd), or of Krassin or Radek -- all Jews. In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combatting Counter-Revolution [the Cheka] has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jewesses

Needless to say, the most intense passions of revenge have been excited in the breasts of the Russian people.

David R. Francis, United States ambassador in Russia, warned in a January 1918 dispatch to Washington: "The Bolshevik leaders here, most of whom are Jews and 90 percent of whom are returned exiles, care little for Russia or any other country but are internationalists and they are trying to start a worldwide social revolution."14

The Netherlands' ambassador in Russia, Oudendyke, made much the same point a few months later: "Unless Bolshevism is nipped in the bud immediately, it is bound to spread in one form or another over Europe and the whole world as it is organized and worked by Jews who have no nationality, and whose one object is to destroy for their own ends the existing order of things."15

"The Bolshevik Revolution," declared a leading American Jewish community paper in 1920, "was largely the product of Jewish thinking, Jewish discontent, Jewish effort to reconstruct."16

As an expression of its radically anti-nationalist character, the fledgling Soviet government issued a decree a few months after taking power that made anti-Semitism a crime in Russia. The new Communist regime thus became the first in the world to severely punish all expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment.17 Soviet officials apparently regarded such measures as indispensable. Based on careful observation during a lengthy stay in Russia, American-Jewish scholar Frank Golder reported in 1925 that "because so many of the Soviet leaders are Jews anti-Semitism is gaining [in Russia], particularly in the army [and] among the old and new intelligentsia who are being crowded for positions by the sons of Israel."18

Historians' Views

Summing up the situation at that time, Israeli historian Louis Rapoport writes:19

Immediately after the [Bolshevik] Revolution, many Jews were euphoric over their high representation in the new government. Lenin's first Politburo was dominated by men of Jewish origins

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Under Lenin, Jews became involved in all aspects of the Revolution, including its dirtiest work. Despite the Communists' vows to eradicate anti-Semitism, it spread rapidly after the Revolution -- partly because of the prominence of so many Jews in the Soviet administration, as well as in the traumatic, inhuman Sovietization drives that followed. Historian Salo Baron has noted that an immensely disproportionate number of Jews joined the new Bolshevik secret police, the Cheka. And many of those who fell afoul of the Cheka would be shot by Jewish investigators.

The collective leadership that emerged in Lenin's dying days was headed by the Jew Zinoviev, a loquacious, mean-spirited, curly-haired Adonis whose vanity knew no bounds.

"Anyone who had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Cheka," wrote Jewish historian Leonard Schapiro, "stood a very good chance of finding himself confronted with, and possibly shot by, a Jewish investigator."²⁰ In Ukraine, "Jews made up nearly 80 percent of the rank-and-file Cheka agents," reports W. Bruce Lincoln, an American professor of Russian history.²¹ (Beginning as the Cheka, or Vecheka) the Soviet secret police was later known as the GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD and KGB.)

In light of all this, it should not be surprising that Yakov M. Yurovsky, the leader of the Bolshevik squad that carried out the murder of the Tsar and his family, was Jewish, as was Sverdlov, the Soviet chief who co-signed Lenin's execution order.²²

Igor Shafarevich, a Russian mathematician of world stature, has sharply criticized the Jewish role in bringing down the Romanov monarchy and establishing Communist rule in his country. Shafarevich was a leading dissident during the final decades of Soviet rule. A prominent human rights activist, he was a founding member of the Committee on the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR.

In *Russophobia*, a book written ten years before the collapse of Communist rule, he noted that Jews were "amazingly" numerous among the personnel of the Bolshevik secret police. The characteristic Jewishness of the Bolshevik executioners, Shafarevich went on, is most conspicuous in the execution of Nicholas II:²³

This ritual action symbolized the end of centuries of Russian history, so that it can be compared only to the execution of Charles I in England or Louis XVI in France. It would seem that representatives of an insignificant ethnic minority should keep as far as possible from this painful action, which would reverberate in all history. Yet what names do we meet? The execution was personally overseen by Yakov Yurovsky who shot the Tsar; the president of the local Soviet was Beloborodov (Vaisbart); the person responsible for the general administration in Ekaterinburg was Shaya Goloshchekin. To round out the picture, on the wall of the room where the execution took place was a distich from a poem by Heine (written in German) about King Balthazar, who offended Jehovah and was killed for the offense.

In his 1920 book, British veteran journalist Robert Wilton offered a similarly harsh assessment:²⁴

The whole record of Bolshevism in Russia is indelibly impressed with the stamp of alien invasion. The murder of the Tsar, deliberately planned by the Jew Sverdlov (who came to Russia as a paid agent of Germany) and carried out by the Jews Goloshchekin, Syromolotov, Safarov, Voikov and Yurovsky, is the act not of the Russian people, but of this hostile invader.

In the struggle for power that followed Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin emerged victorious over his rivals, eventually succeeding in putting to death nearly every one of the most prominent early Bolsheviks leaders - including Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, and Kamenev. With the passage of time, and particularly after 1928, the Jewish role in the top leadership of the Soviet state and its Communist party diminished markedly.

Put To Death Without Trial

For a few months after taking power, Bolshevik leaders considered bringing "Nicholas Romanov" before a "Revolutionary Tribunal" that would publicize his "crimes against the people" before sentencing him to death. Historical precedent existed for this. Two European monarchs had lost their lives as a consequence of revolutionary upheaval: England's Charles I was beheaded in 1649, and France's Louis XVI was guillotined in 1793.

In these cases, the king was put to death after a lengthy public trial, during which he was allowed to present arguments in his defense. Nicholas II, though, was neither charged nor tried. He was secretly put to death - along

with his family and staff -- in the dead of night, in an act that resembled more a gangster-style massacre than a formal execution.

Why did Lenin and Sverdlov abandon plans for a show trial of the former Tsar? In Wilton's view, Nicholas and his family were murdered because the Bolshevik rulers knew quite well that they lacked genuine popular support, and rightly feared that the Russian people would never approve killing the Tsar, regardless of pretexts and legalistic formalities.

For his part, Trotsky defended the massacre as a useful and even necessary measure. He wrote:²⁵

The decision [to kill the imperial family] was not only expedient but necessary. The severity of this punishment showed everyone that we would continue to fight on mercilessly, stopping at nothing. The execution of the Tsar's family was needed not only in order to frighten, horrify, and instill a sense of hopelessness in the enemy but also to shake up our own ranks, to show that there was no turning back, that ahead lay either total victory or total doom. This Lenin sensed well.

Historical Context

In the years leading up to the 1917 revolution, Jews were disproportionately represented in all of Russia's subversive leftist parties.²⁶ Jewish hatred of the Tsarist regime had a basis in objective conditions. Of the leading European powers of the day, imperial Russia was the most institutionally conservative and anti-Jewish. For example, Jews were normally not permitted to reside outside a large area in the west of the Empire known as the "Pale of Settlement."²⁷

However understandable, and perhaps even defensible, Jewish hostility toward the imperial regime may have been, the remarkable Jewish role in the vastly more despotic Soviet regime is less easy to justify. In a recently published book about the Jews in Russia during the 20th century, Russian-born Jewish writer Sonya Margolina goes so far as to call the Jewish role in supporting the Bolshevik regime the "historic sin of the Jews."²⁸ She points, for example, to the prominent role of Jews as commandants of Soviet Gulag concentration and labor camps, and the role of Jewish Communists in the systematic destruction of Russian churches. Moreover, she goes on, "The Jews of the entire world supported Soviet power, and remained silent in the

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face of any criticism from the opposition." In light of this record, Margolina offers a grim prediction:

The exaggeratedly enthusiastic participation of the Jewish Bolsheviks in the subjugation and destruction of Russia is a sin that will be avenged. Soviet power will be equated with Jewish power, and the furious hatred against the Bolsheviks will become hatred against Jews.

If the past is any indication, it is unlikely that many Russians will seek the revenge that Margolina prophesies. Anyway, to blame "the Jews" for the horrors of Communism seems no more justifiable than to blame "white people" for Negro slavery, or "the Germans" for the Second World War or "the Holocaust."

Words of Grim Portent

Nicholas and his family are only the best known of countless victims of a regime that openly proclaimed its ruthless purpose. A few weeks after the Ekaterinburg massacre, the newspaper of the fledgling Red Army declared:²⁹

Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies by the scores of hundreds, let them be thousands, let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin and Uritskii let there be floods of blood of the bourgeoisie -- more blood, as much as possible.

Grigori Zinoviev, speaking at a meeting of Communists in September 1918, effectively pronounced a death sentence on ten million human beings: "We must carry along with us 90 million out of the 100 million of Soviet Russia's inhabitants. As for the rest, we have nothing to say to them. They must be annihilated."³⁰

'The Twenty Million'

As it turned out, the Soviet toll in human lives and suffering proved to be much higher than Zinoviev's murderous rhetoric suggested. Rarely, if ever, has a regime taken the lives of so many of its own people.³¹

Citing newly-available Soviet KGB documents, historian Dmitri Volkogonov, head of a special Russian parliamentary commission, recently concluded that "from 1929 to 1952 21.5 million [Soviet] people were

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repressed. Of these a third were shot, the rest sentenced to imprisonment, where many also died."³²

Olga Shatunovskaya, a member of the Soviet Commission of Party Control, and head of a special commission during the 1960s appointed by premier Khrushchev, has similarly concluded: "From January 1, 1935 to June 22, 1941, 19,840,000 enemies of the people were arrested. Of these, seven million were shot in prison, and a majority of the others died in camp." These figures were also found in the papers of Politburo member Anastas Mikoyan.

Robert Conquest, the distinguished specialist of Soviet history, recently summed up the grim record of Soviet "repression" of its own people:³⁴

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the post-1934 death toll was well over ten million. To this should be added the victims of the 1930-1933 famine, the kulak deportations, and other anti-peasant campaigns, amounting to another ten million plus. The total is thus in the range of what the Russians now refer to as "The Twenty Million'."

A few other scholars have given significantly higher estimates.³⁵
The Tsarist Era in Retrospect

With the dramatic collapse of Soviet rule, many Russians are taking a new and more respectful look at their country's pre-Communist history, including the era of the last Romanov emperor. While the Soviets -- along with many in the West -- have stereotypically portrayed this era as little more than an age of arbitrary despotism, cruel suppression and mass poverty, the reality is rather different. While it is true that the power of the Tsar was absolute, that only a small minority had any significant political voice, and that the mass of the empire's citizens were peasants, it is worth noting that Russians during the reign of Nicholas II had freedom of press, religion, assembly and association, protection of private property, and free labor unions. Sworn enemies of the regime, such as Lenin, were treated with remarkable leniency.³⁶

During the decades prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the Russian economy was booming. In fact, between 1890 and 1913, it was the fastest growing in the world. New rail lines were opened at an annual rate double that of the Soviet years. Between 1900 and 1913, iron production increased

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by 58 percent, while coal production more than doubled.³⁷ Exported Russian grain fed all of Europe. Finally, the last decades of Tsarist Russia witnessed a magnificent flowering of cultural life.

Everything changed with the First World War, a catastrophe not only for Russia, but for the entire West.

Monarchist Sentiment

In spite of (or perhaps because of) the relentless official campaign during the entire Soviet era to stamp out every uncritical memory of the Romanovs and imperial Russia, a virtual cult of popular veneration for Nicholas II has been sweeping Russia in recent years.

People have been eagerly paying the equivalent of several hours' wages to purchase portraits of Nicholas from street vendors in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities. His portrait now hangs in countless Russian homes and apartments. In late 1990, all 200,000 copies of a first printing of a 30-page pamphlet on the Romanovs quickly sold out. Said one street vendor: "I personally sold four thousand copies in no time at all. It's like a nuclear explosion. People really want to know about their Tsar and his family." Grass roots pro-Tsarist and monarchist organizations have sprung up in many cities.

A public opinion poll conducted in 1990 found that three out of four Soviet citizens surveyed regard the killing of the Tsar and his family as a despicable crime.³⁸ Many Russian Orthodox believers regard Nicholas as a martyr. The independent "Orthodox Church Abroad" canonized the imperial family in 1981, and the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church has been under popular pressure to take the same step, in spite of its long-standing reluctance to touch this official taboo. The Russian Orthodox Archbishop of Ekaterinburg announced plans in 1990 to build a grand church at the site of the killings. "The people loved Emperor Nicholas," he said. "His memory lives with the people, not as a saint but as someone executed without court verdict, unjustly, as a sufferer for his faith and for orthodoxy."³⁹

On the 75th anniversary of the massacre (in July 1993), Russians recalled the life, death and legacy of their last Emperor. In Ekaterinburg, where a large white cross festooned with flowers now marks the spot where the family was killed, mourners wept as hymns were sung and prayers were said for the victims.⁴⁰

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Reflecting both popular sentiment and new social-political realities, the white, blue and red horizontal tricolor flag of Tsarist Russia was officially adopted in 1991, replacing the red Soviet banner. And in 1993, the imperial two-headed eagle was restored as the nation's official emblem, replacing the Soviet hammer and sickle. Cities that had been re-named to honor Communist figures -- such as Leningrad, Kuibyshev, Frunze, Kalinin, and Gorky -- have re-acquired their Tsarist-era names. Ekaterinburg, which had been named Sverdlovsk by the Soviets in 1924 in honor of the Soviet-Jewish chief, in September 1991 restored its pre-Communist name, which honors Empress Catherine I.

Symbolic Meaning

In view of the millions that would be put to death by the Soviet rulers in the years to follow, the murder of the Romanov family might not seem of extraordinary importance. And yet, the event has deep symbolic meaning. In the apt words of Harvard University historian Richard Pipes:⁴¹

The manner in which the massacre was prepared and carried out, at first denied and then justified, has something uniquely odious about it, something that radically distinguishes it from previous acts of regicide and brands it as a prelude to twentieth-century mass murder.

Another historian, Ivor Benson, characterized the killing of the Romanov family as symbolic of the tragic fate of Russia and, indeed, of the entire West, in this century of unprecedented agony and conflict.

The murder of the Tsar and his family is all the more deplorable because, whatever his failings as a monarch, Nicholas II was, by all accounts, a personally decent, generous, humane and honorable man.

The Massacre's Place in History

The mass slaughter and chaos of the First World War, and the revolutionary upheavals that swept Europe in 1917-1918, brought an end not only to the ancient Romanov dynasty in Russia, but to an entire continental social order. Swept away as well was the Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany, with its stable constitutional monarchy, and the ancient Habsburg dynasty of Austria-Hungary with its multinational central European empire. Europe's leading states shared not only the same Christian and Western cultural foundations, but most of the continent's reigning monarchs were related by

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blood. England's King George was, through his mother, a first cousin of Tsar Nicholas, and, through his father, a first cousin of Empress Alexandra. Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm was a first cousin of the German-born Alexandra, and a distant cousin of Nicholas.

More than was the case with the monarchies of western Europe, Russia's Tsar personally symbolized his land and nation. Thus, the murder of the last emperor of a dynasty that had ruled Russia for three centuries not only symbolically presaged the Communist mass slaughter that would claim so many Russian lives in the decades that followed, but was symbolic of the Communist effort to kill the soul and spirit of Russia itself.

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